

The Qurʾān
Modernity and Globalization



MALIK BENNABI (1905-1973)

The Qur'an Modernity and Globalization

Studies in Commemoration of Malik Bennabi

Edited by

Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi



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*To Shaikh Rached al-Ghannouchi
who first opened my mind to the intellectual world of Malik Bennabi*

The Editor

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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an has played the formative role in Muslim history and is the foundational text, par excellence, of Islamic life, thought and culture. Around it a cluster of disciplines has evolved and a large and variegated body of scholarship has developed over the centuries. Of all known scriptures in the world the Qur'an is the only book that still exerts profound and far-reaching influence on a very large portion of humanity today. Unlike any of the books revered by the living religious traditions of mankind, it is the only book that has been preserved in its original language and which, literally speaking, millions of male and female sincere believers memorize totally or partially, be they scholars or ordinary people, young or old, rich or poor, native speakers of Arabic or not. This, indeed, is a unique cultural and social phenomenon in human history that is worthy of serious and far-sighted study.

Despite the torrential spread of secularism in the wake of the hegemonic dominance of Western (Euro-American) civilization in the world and its infiltration in Muslim societies at all levels over the last one century at least, the Muslim world has witnessed an aggressive and steady process of *de-secularization* of life and thought that may be seen as an irrevocable turn in contemporary Muslim history. No serious student of the state of affairs in Muslim societies would dare to deny that the Qur'an has been at the centre-stage of those developments as a major source of inspiration for thought and action. Gone are the days when, *à la* Orientalist or any brand of historicist stance, one would venture to downplay or explain away the powerful and profound impact of the Qur'an in orienting and shaping human life in all its dimensions. Gone too are the days when, *à la* Nöldeke and philological schools, some would exert themselves to dilute the identity of the Qur'an by artificially tracing its contents to something other than itself and ascribing it to sources other than Revelation whence its provenance it claims to be.

For Muslims taking their faith seriously, the Qur'an is not only the basis of ritual worship and moral and spiritual guidance for the individual. It is, more importantly, the spring of meaning for life and the source of law for society to live according to the will of God by translating the enduring values and eternal principles enshrined in its verses into its socio-historical reality. This is because, as the Qur'an itself ascertains on many an occasion, its teachings aim at the good and wellbeing of human beings both in this life and the life to come. As Tamara Sonn put it in her introductory chapter to *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an* (2006), "the Qur'ān may be described as charging humanity with the task of sanctifying all aspects of human life by bringing them into accord with the will of God."

At a time when all other religious scriptures of mankind and the cultural traditions built upon them seem to have definitively succumbed to the dictates of the positive secular-materialist mind whose sway has been reinforced through the different vehicles of the so-called age of globalization, thus eroding the moral and spiritual foundations of humanity, the Qur'an stands out as the most challenging force to the secular worldview and reductionist modes of thinking that have crystallized and spread in the wake of successive waves of Western modernity and post-modernity. It continues to inspire scores of intellectual and academic works in many languages of the world, especially in English, by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. As a cursory look at many of the works that have appeared during the last fifteen to twenty years in both English and French clearly shows, a general trend in Qur'an-related studies seems to be asserting itself vigorously among Western scholars: to deal with the Qur'an as it presents itself, that is, to understand it on its own terms.

The Qur'an, as it claims itself to be, comes from the ultimate source of Truth and its laws conform to human nature (*dīn al-fīṭrah*), as both creation and revelation ensue from one and the same source: God the Creator and Commander of the universe (Q 7: 54). Perhaps this was what Thomas Carlyle wanted to say long time ago, when he exclaimed that the Qur'an "is a voice direct from Nature's own heart!" Accordingly, coming to terms

with the Qur'an can only be achieved, as Fazlur Rahman rightly argued in his *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, through a systematic approach that would "yield insight into the cohesive outlook on the universe and life which the Qur'an undoubtedly possesses."

The chapters making up this book are the outcome of a one-day seminar organized on 23 July 2002 by the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge, International Islamic University Malaysia, in commemoration of the eminent twentieth-century Algerian thinker Malik Bennabi (1905-1973). "Al-Qur'an in the era of globalization" was the theme of the seminar. The choice of the theme was to tune with an essential aspect of Bennabi's intellectual work and career for which the Qur'an was the frame of reference and lasting source of inspiration. The book consists of seven chapters, five in English and two in Arabic.

In the first chapter by Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi, the author tries to situate Bennabi's book *The Qur'anic Phenomenon* within the general context of the intellectual and cultural encounter between the Muslim world and modern Western civilization. He sees it as a profoundly thought-out response to the philosophical challenges posed by that civilization to religion in general and to Islam in particular. The second chapter deals specifically with Bennabi's work just mentioned by looking into some of its hermeneutic aspects. Its author, Mustapha Tajdin, addresses two main issues that constitute an integral part of Bennabi's hermeneutics of the Qur'an, namely his reformulation of the question of the inimitability of the Qur'an (*i'jāz*) and his phenomenological approach to establish its externality and transcendental nature vis-a-vis the age and environment of its advent. In the third chapter, Ibrahim M. Zein makes a more specific step into exploring an important aspect of Bennabi's phenomenological study of the Qur'an. He examines the textual strategy employed by the Algerian thinker in his comparative analysis of the story of Prophet Joseph in the Biblical and Qur'anic accounts. By this, Zein aimed to show how Bennabi could challenge modernity's negative position towards religion by using its own rational means.

The last two chapters of the English section do not deal directly with Bennabi's work, but with Qur'an related issues. Thus,

Israr Ahmad Khan addresses in chapter four the issue of the proper approach to understanding the Qur'an by focusing on the notion of coherence among its sūrahs and verses. Basing himself mainly on the works of Abdul-Hameed al-Farahi and Amin Ahsan Islahi, he suggests a set of principles upon which the idea of coherence rests and then attempts to apply those principles at interpreting a number of selected medium sūrahs. In chapter five Mohd Hazim Shah reflects on the question of the construction and dissemination of knowledge in the age of globalization. His aim is to show how the Qur'anic perspective can offer a viable alternative in addressing many of the fundamental issues that have always preoccupied the human mind concerning the possibility, validity, verification and limits of human knowledge.

In the Arabic section, a unifying theme runs through the contributions of Abdelaziz Berghout and Mohamed Ben Naser, namely the question of universalism in contradistinction with globalization. In chapter six, Berghout discusses Bennabi's notion of universal civilization as a unit of analysis of human socio-cultural affairs. Reflecting on the dynamics of human history from a universal perspective, Bennabi, as the author of this chapter tells us, saw that mankind was moving towards a stage of unity characterized by the emergence of the truly universal man and the dawn of a real universal civilization in which Islam would play a fundamental role both in terms of vision and values. Looking at the question of values, Ben Naser contrasts, in chapter seven, universalism with globalization. He argues that globalization whose spirit and mechanisms have been mainly determined by the instrumental reason and secular outlook of Western civilization, has actually resulted in the imposition of a materialist and exploitative model of life at the expense of all humane moral and spiritual values. Accordingly, he sees that humanity nowadays is far away from a truly universal age where all peoples and cultures would equally participate in the process of shaping human civilization based on universal values restoring human essential dignity in all its dimensions.

By making these contributions available to the wider public, I hope I will have discharged part of my personal obligation to-

wards Malik Bennabi and his legacy as well as towards Islamic thought in its grappling with the challenges facing mankind in our age. I also hope the publication of this book will inspire more focused and specialized studies that delve more profoundly into the world of the Qur'an.

Finally, I must thank the authors of the chapters of the book for their kind cooperation and understanding. I should also express my gratitude to the leadership of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and the Research Management Centre at the International Islamic University whose indulgence, encouragement and support have been instrumental for me in preparing this book for publication. Any shortcomings are, however, solely mine.

May God the Almighty shower His blessings on us and guide our steps on the path of truth and justice in both thought and action.

CHAPTER 1

Malik Bennabi's Response to Western Modernity: Contextualizing *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*

Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi

Introduction

Although this chapter draws on previous work on Malik Bennabi done by the writer, it is not however mere replication thereof. In it an attempt is made to bring into focus the most enduring philosophical aspects of Bennabi's thought.

The author argues that in the context of Muslim cultural history over the last one and half century, Bennabi's works in general and his *The Qur'anic Phenomenon* in particular, stand out as one of the most well informed intellectual responses to, and engagement with, modern Western philosophical and scientific thought. His treatment of various theological, moral, social and cultural issues is guided by a strong sense of the unity of human history, and informed by a clear and profound philosophical bent of mind and a sharp awareness of the cross cultural and intellectual currents that have been at work, especially in the West and the Muslim World. These features of his thinking are consolidated and given full scope by what can be seen as a visionary passion driving toward transcending the prevailing thought categories not through a mere haughty ideological attitude, but through a conscious and creative commitment to systematic theorizing. This, it seems, is what enabled Bennabi to boldly question some of the fundamental premises of Western culture and civilization and to realize some of their grave epistemological and moral consequences. In what follows an

attempt is made to explore, though briefly, how these characteristics of his thought are manifested through his seminal book *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*.

Being more than just an attempt to prove the supernatural and divine source of the Qur'an, Bennabi's work is indeed a plea against reductionism of all sorts and claims. At a time when the once-revered wisdom and authorities of an imperialistically globalized modernity are foundering under post-modern attacks, humanity is witnessing a strong rebirth of sophistry and an unabated rise of skepticism and nihilism.

As a preface to our attempt to contextualize Bennabi's work on the Qur'an, it would be appropriate to provide a brief summary of the major landmarks of his life and career. A comprehensive and documented account of his life and works will of course be recommended as future study in order to draw an accurate intellectual and biographical portrait of this eminent and original thinker, especially after a number of his previously unheard of works, including parts of his memoirs, have recently been published.¹

Malik Bennabi: A Biographical Sketch

Without indulging in any discussion as to the insufficiency or non-verifiability of Bennabi's autobiography, there seems to be a general agreement between those who have written about him on the major events and stages of his life and career. In this sketch we shall provide those major events and stages without any elaboration.

- 1905: Malik Bennabi was born in January in Constantine, east Algeria to a family of established religious tradition. He later received his primary Qur'anic and French schooling in the small city of Tébessa (on the Tunisian–Algerian borders) where his father worked as an officer in the Islamic Shar'ah court.
- 1921–5: Bennabi completed his secondary studies at the *Madrasah* or *Lycée Franco-Arabe* of Constantine. During this period, he came into contact with the nascent reformist current launched by Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Bādis.

¹ Bennabi, Malek, *Mémoires d'un Témoin du Siècle: l'Enfant, l'Étudiant, l'Écrivain, les Carnets*, ed. Nour-Eddine Boukrouh (Algiers: Editions Samar, 2006), especially pp. 247–526.

- 1925: He made a first unsuccessful attempt to pursue his graduate studies in France due to lack of financial means.
- 1927: Following many attempts to find a job, Bennabi was finally appointed as assistant officer to the Shari'ah court of Aflou in the far Western province of Oran.
- 1928: He was transferred to the court of Chelghoum Laid (in the eastern region of the country) from which he resigned following a dispute with a French clerk of the civil court of the small town.
- 1929: Bennabi embarked on an unsuccessful business enterprise.
- 1930: France celebrates, both at home and in Algiers, the centenary of French occupation of Algeria. Relying on his father's meagre financial resources, Bennabi left to Paris to continue his studies. Following a politically motivated rejection by the famous French Orientalist Louis Massignon of his application to join the *Institut des Langues Orientales* de Paris, he joined a polytechnic school from which he graduated as electrical engineer in 1935.
- 1931: He joined the *Association des Jeunes Chrétiens*, a Christian youth society in search of spirituality and pious conduct. Besides the social and economic support it provided for him, this society also gave Bennabi the opportunity to deliver his first public talk ever under the title "*Pourquoi sommes-nous musulmans?*" (Why are we Muslims?) In the same year, he became the vice-president of the Muslim Students Association of North Africa. In the same year, he married a French convert who chose Khadija as her Muslim name.

As a result of Bennabi's anti-colonialist activism, his father was transferred far-away from his hometown, which seriously affected the family's social and economic situation.

- 1936: As a result of unemployment and due to his family's worsening economic situation, Bennabi made unsuccessful attempts to migrate to the Hejaz (Saudi Arabia), Egypt, Afghanistan and Albania.
- 1938: An old friend from Tébessa put him in contact with an association of immigrant Algerian workers at the city of Marseille

looking for a person who could conduct literacy tuition for them. Bennabi became the director of the *Centre Culturel du Congrès Musulman Algérien* founded by the Association. The success of the center attracted the attention of the French authorities that soon closed it down after a few months of intense activity.

- 1940: Following a call for competitive examination by the Japanese embassy in Paris, Bennabi submitted to the latter a study on Islam and Japan.
- 1942: Bennabi's life conditions worsened due to World War Two and the total breakdown of relations between Algeria and France after November 1942 as most of North Africa fell under control of the Axis forces. He was compelled to accept a job in Germany. There he managed to write his first and seminal book *Le Phénomène Coranique* (*The Qur'anic Phenomenon*). The manuscript was subsequently destroyed during an air raid, yet it was rewritten basically from memory. The book was then published in 1947 in Algiers.
- After the liberation of France in 1944 and as a result of a cabal mounted by the mayor of Dreux where he was living, Bennabi and his French wife were taken into police custody.
- From 1946 Bennabi started his unbroken career as a writer.
- 1947: He published his only novel, *Lebbeik*, depicting the spiritual and geographical journey of a poor Algerian pilgrim to Makkah and Madīnah.
- 1948: Publication of his controversial *Les Conditions de la Renaissance* (*The Conditions of the Renaissance*).
- 1949–55: Bennabi committed himself to make a sustained contribution to the major Muslim press in Algeria, especially *La République Algérienne* (associated with the Democratic Union led by Ferhat Abbas) and *Le Jeune Musulman* (a publication of the Ulama Association led by Shaykh Muhammad Bashir al-Ibrahimi).
- 1954: His fourth major book, *La Vocation de l'Islam*, was published in Paris by the renowned publishing house Editions du Seuil.

- 1956: Bennabi was invited to India to present his book *L'Afro-Asiatisme*, in which he set out the theoretical and cultural foundations of the non-alignment movement whose first germs were sown during the Bandung Conference in 1955. He left France illegally and ended up in Cairo where he decided to settle down.
- On September 1, 1956 he requested the political leadership of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) in Cairo to be employed as a military male nurse with the fighting units of the National Liberation Army (ALN) inside Algeria so that he could write the internal history of the revolution. He received no reply to his request.
- June 1957: Bennabi published (in Arabic, French, and German) a booklet entitled *SOS Algeria* in which he denounced the atrocities and genocide committed by the French army against the Algerian people. He then continued to promote the Algerian cause by his own means.
- 1957–62: Bennabi organized and conducted a series of informal seminars of intellectual and ideological edification for Muslim youth and students in Cairo. The publication of the French and Arabic versions of his book *L'Afro-Asiatisme* was made possible thanks to a sponsorship by the Egyptian government. During this period, he travelled regularly to Syria and Lebanon to deliver public talks and meet with intellectuals and thinkers. Besides the translation into Arabic of his earlier books, Bennabi's intellectual activity at this stage resulted in a number of important books, such as *Milād Mujtama'* (*On the Origins of Human Society*), *Fikrat Commonwealth Islāmī* (*The Idea of an Islamic Commonwealth*) and *al-Širā' al-Fikrī fī al-Bilād al-Musta' marah* (*The Ideological Struggle in the Colonized Countries*).
- 1963: After Algeria's independence he returned home where he was assigned by President Ahmad Ben Bella to establish a centre for cultural orientation. Weary of the bureaucratic routine that delayed the approval of the project, Bennabi launched a regular intellectual forum from his home where discussions focused on the issues of culture and civilization.

- 1964: He was appointed as Director of Higher Education. Meanwhile, he continued his intellectual activity and contributed regularly to the local press, especially the French weekly *Révolution Africaine* to which he contributed articles almost every week.
- 1968–70: After resigning from his official post, Bennabi devoted himself to lecturing in seminars and conferences both in Algeria and abroad to disseminate his ideas to a wider audience. During this period, he founded the annual Conference on Islamic Thought that lasted up to the late 1980s.
- At this stage of his intellectual career, Bennabi published a number of other important books. They include, among others, his two-volume memoirs, *Le Problème des idées dans le monde musulman*, *al-Muslim fi 'Alam al-Iqtisād*, *Perspectives Algériennes*, *L'Islam et la démocratie*, and *l'Oeuvre des Orientalistes*.
- October 31, 1973: After completing a tour which took him in 1971 and 1972 to a number of places from Mecca to Damascus and Beirut, where he delivered talks about “the Muslim’s role in the last third of the 20th century”, Bennabi breathed his last in Algiers where he was buried, leaving behind many unpublished works.

Modernity and its Aftermath

The socio-political and intellectual forces that unleashed the phenomenon of modernity in Europe were characterized by one major feature: antagonism and belligerence vis-à-vis tradition in all its forms. Tradition was mainly identified with religion. Therefore, a totally uncompromising crusade had to be waged against religion and the church – its formal and institutional embodiment – in order for modernity’s programme to ‘de-traditionalize’ society and culture to be implemented. Regardless of the multiple factors that were in play and that finally shaped the historical destiny and cultural character of Europe from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, reason and science emerged as the crowned twins with whom ultimate authority should rest.

Reason, which was now claiming universality for its principles and dictates, had, as its *bête-noire* enemies, tradition, authority,

emotion, example, etc. These enemies had to be confronted and fiercely combated.¹ As for science, its model was to be found in physics as philosophically conceptualized by Descartes and mathematically formulated by Newton based on his theory of the universe as a clock-like, self-sufficient entity.

Accordingly, beliefs and values could only be sanctioned if they passed the test of reason and science. Reality and truth were deemed to be only that which could be vindicated by the canons of reason and measured by the yardstick of science. This is all well and good, but it is not the actual problem. Indeed, human beings in their age-long experience have always resorted to reason and science to vindicate their beliefs and values, to understand their position in the world, to comprehend reality and truth and to deal with nature and the different realms of existence, no matter how reason and science might have been conceived in different civilizations and by different peoples.

What really characterizes reason and science within the context of Western modernity and constitutes their problem at the same time, is their secular and reductionist orientation. Driven by a desire to free values from the parochialism that allegedly characterized them in the world of the Middle Ages, the process of rationalization resulted in the de-consecration of values and desacralization of human life. Animated by a strong desire to demystify and control nature and attain certainty in knowing it, science ended up limiting nature to physical phenomena and equating the latter with the quantifiable that can and must ultimately be subsumed in precise mathematical equations.

Thus, reason, with its universal canons and ontological principles as advocated by early philosophical theorists of modernity such as Descartes, was progressively receding for the benefit of a conception of human rationality in which it was narrowly identified with science. The narrowing of human rationality and reason was based on "the enormous metaphysical assumption that the reality to which science has access is the whole

¹ Ernest Gellner, *Reason and Culture* (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 55-110.

of reality.” This, according to Roger Trigg, means that humans “have no other source of knowledge, nor any other means of reasoning.”¹ A doctrine or ideology of scientism thus emerged whose first victim was universal reason itself. Likewise, human rationality had to be “subordinated to contemporary science whatever it may happen to be saying.” It followed from this, as Trigg asserts, that philosophy and rationality became “the handmaiden of science rather than its rational underpinning.”²

This, indeed, was a major development of modernity towards reductionism in human knowledge and vision of the world, a reductionism that sought to bring “everything down to the level of physical explanation.”³ This ‘physicalism’ was philosophically formulated in the so-called scientific world-view, be it positivistic or otherwise. By reducing rationality from a holistic outlook to a physicalist conception of the world and reality and by making reason a mere instrument of science as patterned after physics, modernity left the door wide open to relativism in the various aspects of thought and life.

One of the most devastating outcomes of these developments can, perhaps, be seen in the loss of meaning that has pervaded almost all aspects of human life. Even physical objects, which in the beginning constituted the subject of study for the natural sciences, have been torn asunder and no more constitute an objective reality. This has been further consolidated and given more philosophical grounding by revolutionary developments in the physical and natural sciences. Quantum mechanics, in particular, “deprived matter of the solidity it was thought to possess”⁴ and destructively affected “the program of modern philosophy.”⁵ The subject matter of scientific knowledge itself was now at stake. Indeed, “the very notion of an objective nature of

¹ Roger Trigg, *Rationality and Science: Can Science Explain Every-thing?* (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1993), p. 60.

² *Ibid.* p. 81.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Charles Le Gai Eaton, *Remembering God* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 2000), p. 30.

⁵ Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 147.

the world independent of our knowledge of it came under attack.”¹ Thus, “scientific knowledge is no longer knowledge of things as they are ‘out there’ in an objective world but only in relation to an observer. In a sense, we see what we expect to see in accordance with our own mental patterns.”²

Post-modernity and the Loss of the Centre

Under such circumstances, it is only natural to speak about the eclipse and end of reason, to bid farewell to it, or to announce the end of science, and, indeed, to herald the end of everything including modernity itself.³

This situation, a logical consequence of modernity’s own premises, has been severely aggravated by post-modern trends. If reason used to be assigned the position of authority and was therefore considered to be a reference for human thought and life, and if science taught us that there was some rationality and hence a certain structure in the world, post-modernity has almost done away with all of that.

When it pulled man out of his traditional world-views and value-systems, modernity promised him alternatives that were based on reason and enlightened by science. It did not deprive him totally of a frame of reference and certain absolutes in which to ground himself and his experience. In contrast, post-modernism is effectively creating a real dislocation of the human condition and experience. This dislocation is tied up with a number of assumptions about reality which actually go “far beyond mere relativism.”⁴

One main feature of post-modernist thought, with its new assumptions, is that “things and events do not have intrinsic meaning” and that there is “only continuous interpretation of the

¹ Lawrence Sklar, *Philosophy of Physics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 7.

² Eaton, *Remembering God*, p. 30.

³ See for example, Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Continuum, 1992 [1947]); Paul Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason* (London: Verso, 1987); Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 1988); John Horgan, *The End of Science* (London: Abacus, 1998).

⁴ David S. Dockery, “The Challenge of Post-modernism” in David S. Dockery (ed.), *The Challenge of Post-modernism: An Evangelical Engagement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995), p. 14.

world.”¹ Accordingly, reality, whether natural or social,² has always to be invented and reconstructed time and again. Nothing has truth or meaning in itself. Everything is in permanent flux. The only absolute is total ‘fluidity’ and continuous change.

According to post-modernist thinkers like as Jean Francois Lyotard, the epistemological mark of “post-modernity is the loss of authoritative conceptual structures to serve as the ‘foundation’ of rational knowledge.”³ Regardless of the different brands of post-modernism that writers have tried to map out, one of them seems to hold sway over the others. It is a post-modernism characterized by absolute relativism according to which “objective truth is intolerable and non-existent.” In this type of post-modernism, “not only is any transcendent center of reality disavowed, but the unrelieved flux that replaces it has no center.”⁴ As many post-modernist philosophers tell us, humanity is at present experiencing the total collapse of all grand narratives (i.e., religion, philosophical systems, ideologies, etc.), which in the past underpinned and sustained human experience and consciousness.

This may be true and apply to the historical experience and consciousness of Western (Euro-American) humanity. But to generalize it to all peoples and cultures of the world does not necessarily reflect the truth, despite the relentless attempts by Western powers to universalize that experience and impose that consciousness by all possible means. For we know only too well that a very large portion of mankind all over the globe still continue to defend their traditional world-views and value-systems and strive hard to live according to their requirements.⁵ In fact, even in the West, many philosophers, thinkers and even men of science have expressed their discontent with modernity’s agenda and voiced profound criticism of its reductionist, alienating and dehumanizing

¹ *Ibid.*

² We intentionally do not mention here metaphysical or transcendental reality because it does not constitute part of the scheme of things of modernity and post-modernity.

³ Stephen Toulmin, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁴ Carl F.H. Henry, “Post-modernism: The New Spectre?” in David S. Dockery: *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁵ This is not to deny the fact that different cultures and world-views in the world have been affected and, as it were, contaminated by the plagues of western modernism and post-modernism to varying degrees.

trends long before the self-styled prophets of post-modernism made their prophecies. As a leading biologist accredited with outstanding scientific achievements, René Dubos opined over forty years ago that scientists “should become more vitally concerned about the nature and purpose of man. Only thus”, he insisted, “can they learn to speak to man not a specialist’s jargon but in a truly human language.”¹ Dubos’s advice was the result of his realizing “the failure of the scientific community to organize a systematic effort against the desecration of life and nature.”² This failure, he argued, accounts for the “increasing dehumanization.”³

Thus, if modernity advocated a reductionist, materialist and secular view of the world, post-modernity is advocating a completely fragmented world in which there is no anchoring point for human consciousness and experience. Not only has the object fallen apart, but the subject himself has also vanished. Instead of modernity’s subject, who of course implies the existence of an object, invention is being made of “a floating individual with no distinct reference points or parameters.”⁴

In the wake of modernity’s struggle against tradition and religion, man was left without a heart or soul; yet he was at least reassured that reason and its ally, science, would take care of him. Now post-modernity is cutting up his head and stripping him of his mind. What is then left is a soulless and mindless body that is being pampered by a sweeping culture of consumerism and nihilism. With the post-modern mind, the problem has assumed alarmingly more dangerous dimensions. The evil-guided, power-thirsty and business-oriented manipulations of genetic engineering are indeed precipitating humanity not only into the unknown, but also into the assuredly destructive.⁵ Thus, it is no more a question of mere dehumanization as Dubos and others complained. The

¹ René Dubos, *So Human an Animal* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1968), p. 9.

² *Ibid.* p. 3.

³ *Ibid.* p. 5.

⁴ Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-modernism and the Social Sciences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 54.

⁵ See for example Mae-Wan Ho, *Genetic Engineering: Dream or Nightmare, The Brave World of Bad Science and Big Business* (Penang, Malaysia: TWN, 1998). The author is a British biologist and a fellow of the US National Genetics Foundation.

problem now is that we are told of the end of man in the philosophical and sociological sense in which it would have appeared to a certain Michel Foucault in his archeological critique of the social sciences.¹ In what seems to be a reconsideration of his thesis on the end of history, Francis Fukuyama has warned against what he considers the most significant threat from biotechnology consisting in the possibility of altering human nature and thereby moving the world into a post-human stage of history. As he put it, “the most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a ‘posthuman’ stage of history.”²

It is, in my opinion, against such developments that Bennabi’s severe criticism of Cartesian rationalism and his strong rejection of scientism can better be appreciated. With the foresight of a visionary, he was able to discern to what consequences the logic of Descartes’ rationalism and the scientism he was initiating could ultimately lead. In criticizing the Cartesian rationalist doctrine, Bennabi’s problem was not with Descartes’ belief or disbelief in God, as the objection by Sheikh Muhammad A. Draz in his preface to *The Qur’anic Phenomenon* suggests, thus missing one important aspect of Bennabi’s argument.³ Nor was his problem with reason and science as such. The conception of reason and science as utterly antithetical to religion and revelation was of the utmost concern for Bennabi. His argument in *The Qur’anic Phenomenon*, and in other works as well, is unmistakably informed by a sharp awareness of what may be called modernity’s self-negation, which included almost all its major ‘isms’ such as rationalism, humanism and scientism.⁴

¹ See: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1992).

² Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), p. 7.

³ See Draz’s position in his preface to Bennabi’s *The Qur’anic Phenomenon*, trans. Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2004), p. xxxiii.

⁴ On some of modernity’s internal problems and the crises affecting its thought-systems and ideological constructions, see Lawrence E. Cahoon, *The Dilemma of Modernity* (New York: The State University of New York Press, 1988).

This self-negation can only be seen as a logical consequence of modernity's fundamental inclination towards magnification. In other words, the magnification, for instance, of reason and science led to an absolutization of the scientific world-view and to a belief in the absolute capability of human reason and power to control nature and history and to answer the ultimate questions that have never ceased to haunt the human mind.

Understandably, this magnification and absolutizing could only take place at the expense of the rejection of any supernatural authority and the negation of all transcendent reality. By rejecting divine authority and negating metaphysical reality, modernity, to put it in Bennabi's terms, had to fall into a process of deifying other entities, thus assigning absolute power to other authorities. But once it is realized that those absolutized authorities and deified entities cannot provide the promised panacea, the only alternative is total loss of faith in them and ushering in the post-modern age some of the major features of which we have tried to describe above.

Phenomenology of Religion and Prophethood

The aforementioned considerations are behind Bennabi's strong insistence that modernity's antagonism towards religion should not be seen as a mere conflict between religion and science or reason. For him, it is question of a conflict between two basically different philosophical systems and visions of the world. It is a conflict "between theism and materialism, between the religion that has God as a basis and that which postulates matter as an absolute."¹ It is, in the final analysis, a battle for the ultimate meaning of life, the nature of man and the origin and destiny of the world, with all that this involves at the psychological, philosophical and cosmological levels.²

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Bennabi's work in general was a systematic and highly mature response to the philosophical and cultural challenges that Muslim society has faced in the wake of its encounter with the West. Indeed, the

¹ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 35.

² For a more detailed analysis of this aspect of Bennabi's thought, see Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi, *A Muslim Theory of Human Society: An Investigation into the Sociological Thought of Malik Bennabi* (Batu Caves, KL: Thinker's Library, 1998), pp. 11-38.

particular significance of his book on the Qur'anic phenomenon can only be fully realized in the light of the far-reaching developments that have occurred in that context. It is a conscious intellectual engagement with the secular premises and materialistic scientific world-view of modernity. As I have tried to show, its basic argument is still relevant even with regard to the challenge of post-modernism.

To develop his argument, Bennabi adopted a multi-layered complex method, which can be said to be unprecedented in the field of Qur'anic and Islamic studies in general. Insights from various disciplines and branches of knowledge were intelligently woven together to develop a new approach to the study of religion in general and the Qur'an in particular. Thus, philosophy, archaeology, history, cosmology, sociology, philosophical anthropology and psychoanalysis are all employed to examine religion and prophethood as objective phenomena that transcend all historical contexts and socio-cultural configurations.

With this multi-disciplinary approach, Bennabi succeeded to overcome the inadequacies and shortcomings of the reductionist and subjectivist theories that have prevailed for a relatively long period of time in the study of religion and religious phenomena by different social science disciplines. He started from a basic observation which has been a matter of agreement among scholars and thinkers of different backgrounds. It concerns the fact that religion, as a Durkheimian sociologist put it, "has been the condition for human life in all ages and climes."¹ However, unlike so many modern scholars across the different academic disciplines, he did not explain this fact away by means of historicist, subjectivist or positivist interpretation.² Instead, he saw in the various manifestations of religion throughout human history, from "the simple dolmen to the most imposing temple,"³

¹ Serge Mascovici, *The Invention of Society* (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 1993), p. 33.

² For detailed expositions of different theories of religion, see the following works: Bryan S. Turner, *Religion and Social Theory*, London: Sage Publications, 1983; Malcolm B. Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995); Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

³ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 33.

the clearest evidence as to the inherent religiosity of human nature.

Thus, for Bennabi, religion is not a mere spiritual and mental activity of the human psyche. Rather, it is both a fundamental disposition of the human species and a cosmic fact deeply rooted in the structure of the universe. This means that religion cannot be reduced to a mere cultural category acquired by the human beings over history or relative to the early and primitive stages of their socio-cultural development.¹

It is worth mentioning here that this psycho-cosmological understanding of religion was expressed, albeit in confusing terms, by a number of Western philosophers and scholars. They seem to have tried to free themselves from the yoke of materialism and positivism. As a leading scholar in psychoanalysis, Carl Jung's views deserve special attention here. In an attempt to avoid the inaccuracies of the materialist conception of the psyche," Jung developed a "theory of archetypes" according to which "religion can best be understood by relating it to a collective unconscious" that constitutes a "psychic reality shared by all humans."² As he put it, this "collective unconscious contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution born anew in the brain structure of the individual."³

However, despite the suggestive importance of the idea of a common universal "spiritual heritage" of mankind, Jung did not pursue his inquiry to its logical ends by addressing the essential question concerning the origins and nature of this collective heritage. On the contrary, he simply dismissed it by referring to human evolution. One reason for this might be the following; succumbing to the dominant positivistic paradigms, Jung "eschewed from any metaphysical and philosophical

¹ Muhammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, *al-Madrasah al-Qur'āniyyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'āraf, 1981), pp. 115-118.

² Brian Morris, *Anthropological Studies in Religion* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 168.

³ Carl G. Jung, *The Portable Jung*, edited by J. Campbell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 45-46.

considerations.”¹ To put it differently, it seems as if there were certain boundaries set up by the dominant episteme, which scholars must not cross!

In considering the different expressions of religion (such as totemic belief, polytheism and monotheism), Bennabi's immediate aim was to establish the perennial nature of the religious phenomenon as a characteristic of human nature. Hence, man is described as a religious animal or *homo religiosus*.² From this he proceeded to his ultimate purpose, namely to examine the Qur'anic revelation and Muhammad's prophetic call within the wider context of the monotheistic tradition and prophetic movement, which have characterized three major living religious traditions of the world, i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

For this, he proposed an approach in which both phenomenology and psychoanalysis play prominent roles. In this approach, the particular case of Islam would be linked to the religious phenomenon in general, while its messenger would be regarded as the final link in the chain of the prophetic movement. Similarly, the Qur'anic revelation would be considered to be the culmination of the stream of monotheistic thought. Yet, a comparative historical and psychological analysis was necessary in order for the relationship between the prophets (messengers) and their messages to be properly grasped. Thus, the common characteristics that determined their personality and behaviour could be understood.

To address the latter issue, Bennabi looked into the life and prophetic career of the Israelite Prophet Jeremiah whose book and historical authenticity have been spared by modern Biblical criticism. In contrast to his counterpart, the pseudo-prophet Hanania, the examination of the specific case of Jeremiah shows the following features as distinctive characteristics of a prophet and of the phenomenon of prophethood.

¹ Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 2; cf. J.J. Clarke: *In Search of Jung: Historical and Philosophical Enquiries* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 35.

² Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 34.

1. The Presence of an absolute power that eliminates the prophet's personal will and determines his final and permanent behaviour with respect to his missionary career.
2. A unique and categorical judgement on the future course of events that transcends all logic of history reasoned out by ordinary human beings.
3. The comparison of Jeremiah and other Biblical prophets, such as Amos and the Second Isaiah, reveals a third feature: the similarity of and continuity in the manifestation of the previous two features in all prophets.¹

According to Bennabi, these features, equally manifested in the case of Prophet Muhammad, cannot be explained as being mere subjective traits of the prophet or as the consequence of a disturbed mental state and unbalanced personality, as modern critics would have us believe. On the contrary, they indicate the impersonal character and external source of the prophetic call that rather imposes itself on the personality of the prophet and subdues his will in an absolute manner. The prophets' resistance to the prophetic call provides further evidence on the impersonality and externality of prophethood. They all wished and, indeed, positively tried to avoid it. This resistance is a clear indication of "the opposition between their free will and the determinism that subordinates their will and subjugates their self."²

Having established the phenomenological characteristics of the prophetic movement from Abraham to Muhammad, Bennabi then turned to examine the Qur'an from both a phenomenological and psychoanalytic perspective. In his view, besides its thematic continuity with the previous revelations in terms of its fundamental message to mankind, especially its monotheistic teachings, the Qur'an itself provides a very important clue underlining its

¹ *Ibid.* p. 57. In developing his ideas in this regard, Bennabi has relied heavily on the extensive and well-researched study by the expert of Judeo-Christian studies Adolphe Lods entitled *Les Prophètes d'Israël et Les Débuts du Judaïsme*. This book was first published in Paris by La Renaissance du Livre in 1935, and then by Editions Albin Michel in 1969.

² Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 51.

belonging to the phenomenon of revelation which intimately accompanied the prophetic movement.

Thus, the Qur'an taught Muhammad, its receiver and conveyor, that he was "no innovator among the messengers" (Q. 46: 9). This meant that he was not "preaching anything that was not already preached by all God's messengers" before him.¹ In other words, Muhammad was only a link and, for that matter, the last one, in the long chain of prophets unto whom God had vouchsafed his messages. Accordingly, he was, like all of them, subject to the same laws. Likewise, the above-mentioned characteristics of a prophet were equally manifested in him.

Apart from its phenomenological characteristic both as belonging to the phenomenon of revelation and as being the culmination of religious monotheism, the Qur'an constitutes a phenomenon in and of itself. This seems to be the reason for which Bennabi gave his book the title *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*. Its revelation over almost twenty-three years makes it more than a mere 'event', as Bishop Kenneth Cragg opined.² If a phenomenon can be defined as "an event that repeatedly occurs under the same conditions,"³ then this definition applies to the sequence of the Qur'anic revelations that took place over more than two decades. One aspect of the phenomenological manifestation of the Qur'an concerns its recipient and carrier, the Prophet himself, while the other has to do with the mode of revelation.

At the Prophet's level, Qur'anic revelations were always accompanied by certain psycho-physiological changes that could easily be perceived by those present with him. As for the revelations themselves, they took place according to quantitatively definite

¹ Fakhr al-Dīn Muhammad ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, also known as *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah: 1411/1990), vol. 14/28, p. 7; Nāṣir al-Dīn Abū Sa'īd 'Abd Allāh al-Bayḍawī, *Anwār at-Tanzīl wa Asrār at-Ta'wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416/1996), vol. 5, p. 178.

² Kenneth Cragg, *The Event of the Qur'an: Islam in Its Scripture* (Oxford UK: Oneworld, 1994 (1971)). Cragg's work is noteworthy in that he tried in it to bring into prominence the phenomenological aspects of the Qur'an. However, his analysis seems to obliterate the concept of *wahy* by trying to explain it in terms of the human genius of the Prophet.

³ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 14.

amounts and specific time intervals. This happened in a way that clearly neglected the personal state of the person who was receiving them. Put differently, those revelations were taking place irrespective of the Prophet's grief and sufferings or wishes and aspirations.

In Bennabi's analysis, these phenomenological characteristics of the Qur'an vividly indicate its impersonality and externality with regard to the Prophet's self. This implies that the ideas and knowledge content of the Qur'an superseded the Prophet's personal knowledge and transcended his consciousness. As Cragg beautifully put it, "the Qur'an was never a personal ambition, an anticipated dignity, a private honour. Except as a divine mercy, it could not have been."¹ However, an objection can be raised here. Admitting the impersonal and external character of the Qur'an vis-à-vis Muhammad's self, there is still room for supposing that it mirrored the knowledge and ideas – religious and otherwise – that were available in his environment and age.

To this hypothesis, on which many Western scholars built their studies of Islam and its Prophet, Bennabi devoted a great deal of analysis that runs through the entire book. He has carefully and convincingly drawn a psychological and intellectual portrait of the Prophet, both before and after the prophetic call. He has done so to draw the demarcation line between the Prophet's personal knowledge and ideas and the content of the Qur'an, and then carried a comparative and historical examination of a wide range of Qur'anic themes demonstrating that the true source of the Qur'an can only be conceived on a transcendent, metaphysical plane.

As pointed out earlier, Bennabi's book is a highly mature response to the intellectual challenges of modern philosophical and scientific thought. It can easily be seen as a new kind of Islamic theological and philosophical thinking to explore Qur'anic eternal truths in a new light and from a broader perspective than classical Muslim scholars could have done. Indeed, the approach Bennabi suggested and the methodology he applied in his study of the Qur'an are challenging and worthy of serious consideration by those who seek to open new avenues for

¹ Cragg, *The Event of the Qur'an*, pp. 38-39.

the revival of Islamic thought and reconstruction of Muslim society and civilization.

His reformulation of the issue of *i'jāz*, or the inimitability and 'matchlessness,' of the Qur'an, hitherto considered mainly in linguistic and literary terms, within the wider philosophical and historical context of the religious phenomenon and prophetic movement, is quite unique in Islamic and Qur'anic studies.¹ It invites the mind to a different reading of human religious history and a different understanding of the human condition that goes far beyond the mere concerns of Muslims. This is because of its embracing the view that the Qur'an, to put the matter in Cragg's words, "relates to the larger world on the outer side of [Muslim] experience wherever man, either in his religions or his secularity, is found."²

Accordingly, in developing his psychoanalytic and phenomenological approach to the Qur'an, Bennabi's target was not simply the Muslim who is in need of "a sound perception of the value of the Qur'an" on which "to base his personal faith and conviction." He was also concerned about those who want to deal with the Islamic Scripture "as a mere subject of academic study."³ In other words, this approach was deemed to equally enable the non-Muslim to reach an adequate and just appreciation of the Qur'an whose bearing is not restricted to the Muslim who has possessed it by faith and personal experience. Perhaps we can say, using the words of Kenneth Cragg, Bennabi's method in dealing with the Qur'anic phenomenon "will allow the Qur'an to be possessed from without – possessed, that is, not by the propagandist who wishes to decry or the dilettante who wills to

¹ The works of the late al-Azhar Professor Muhammad Abdallah Draz (1894-1958) deserve to be mentioned here. They are clearly informed with a bent of mind similar to that which guided Bennabi in the present book. A comparative study of *The Qur'anic Phenomenon* and Draz's *Introduction to the Qur'an* (trans. from French by Ayesha Abdel Haleem, London: I.B. Tauris, 2000) and *The Qur'an: an Eternal Challenge* (trans. from French by Adil Salahi, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2001) will reveal striking similarities in their theoretical premises and methodological approach.

² Cragg, *The Event of the Qur'an*, p. 185.

³ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 19.

sentimentalize – but by the seriously concerned who has at once both yearning and reservation, both attraction and misgiving.”¹

As we tried to show in the previous pages, modernity's positivistic conception of reason and its ideology of scientism have had detrimental consequences for the meaning of reality that have been devastatingly aggravated by post-modernist thought.² In the wake of the unfolding processes of globalization in almost all the spheres of human life, those consequences need not be overemphasized here. Bennabi's reflections and insights can rightly be seen as a consolidation of the efforts by many thinkers and scholars all over the world to combat the different forms and waves of reductionism and nihilism that have pushed humanity into the abyss of secularism and secularization.³

Bennabi's *The Qur'anic Phenomenon* was not simply the beginning of his intellectual career as a visionary thinker and prolific writer. When he ends it with the statement that religion “appears to be imprinted in the order of the universe as a law characteristic of the human spirit,”⁴ he does not make an empty statement nor does he play on words. In fact, he has, in this book, laid down the philosophical and methodological foundations of his later works. One can safely assert that his subsequent intellectual efforts in social and cultural theorizing are an elaboration and

¹ Cragg, *The Event of the Qur'an*, p. 186.

² For a profound analysis and discussion in this respect, see Roger Trigg, *Reality at Risk: A Defence of Realism in Philosophy and the Sciences*, The Harvester Press (UK) & Barnes and Noble Books (USA), 1980.

³ For a profound philosophical and historical analysis of secularization and secularism, see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization [ISTAC], 1993). A more recent and comprehensive (theoretical and socio-historical) criticism of secularism and secularization can be found in John L. Esposito and Azzam Tamimi ed.: *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd., 2000). The contributors to this valuable book include prominent thinkers of different backgrounds such as John Keane (professor of political science at the University of Manchester, UK), Rachid al-Ghannouchi (Islamic thinker and political leader of *Ennahda* Movement in Tunisia) and Peter Burger (professor of sociology at Boston University, USA).

⁴ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 283.

substantiation of the central thesis about man and religion developed in this book.¹

Conclusion

As it has already been stated, Bennabi's aim in writing his book on the Qur'an was to address the question of religion and prophethood not only as a Muslim issue, but also as a universal question concerning mankind at large. For him, the intellectual and moral crisis of the modern mind vis-à-vis religion is in fact a manifestation of the deeper spiritual crisis that has engulfed humanity in the wake of modernity's onslaught on the so-called pre-modern belief systems and thought categories as well as modes of conduct and lifestyles.

Thus, the total erosion of the traditional frameworks of human life and experience and the ensuing global crisis cannot be overcome through the partial and superficial treatment that the instrumental reason of modernism and the deconstructive reason of post-modernism have been offering so far. Only a fundamental and holistic approach embracing the human reality in all its complexity and realizing its multifaceted nature can restore humanity to the right track and open new horizons for human wholeness and serenity.

¹ For more details see my *A Muslim Theory of Human Society*, *op. cit.*, and my introduction to Bennabi's *On the Origins of Human Society* (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: The Open Press, 1998).

CHAPTER 2

Some Linguistic Aspects of Malik Bennabi's Hermeneutics in *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*

Mustapha Tajdin

Introduction

This chapter looks into Malik Bennabi's theory of Qur'an interpretation. At first glance, the works of this eminent thinker may not reveal any direct concern about Qur'anic exegesis and interpretation. Even his book *The Qur'anic Phenomenon* – the focus of this study – is not an exception, as its title would apparently suggest. Nonetheless, this judgement would only be relevant if we confine ourselves to the traditional definitions and scope of the term 'interpretation'.

Although Bennabi is content with traditionalist views on various subjects in Islamic scholarship, his strong Islamic background and familiarity with the ideas of Islamic reform movements, on the one hand, and his exposure to Western culture and modes of thought, on the other, enabled him to develop his own approach to 'modernizing' Islamic thought and wrestle with the intellectual and cultural challenges posed modern Western civilization. He tried to explore new perspectives in dealing with such issues. As this study will try to show, he undertook this task in a moderate and balanced manner, resulting in a high appreciation of his ideas even in traditional circles of al-Azhar, the prestigious and authoritative Islamic institution of learning.

Our task is to discover Bennabi's universe of ideas using a set of different tools to disclose his theory of interpretation. Thus, we will try to explore new dimensions of the concept of

interpretation in order to go beyond the traditional definition that narrowed the meaning of the term to linguistic considerations. This would suggest analyzing Bennabi's ideas in the light of a comprehensive theory of meaning that shall include strategies of linguistic and non-linguistic nature.

Hermeneutics: Meaning and Scope

Hermeneutics is a term derived from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which literally means to express, explain, translate or interpret.¹ It seems to have been derived from Hermes, one of the Greek deities whose main task is said to have been to mediate between the deities and man, and to explain to man the intentions of divine beings. The theory of interpretation or hermeneutics, as may be incorrectly inferred from its name, is not restricted to the field of textual interpretation, nor is it a mere concern of theology, especially in the Western tradition. Emilio Betti, a pioneer in this field, states that 'interpretation' has come to form the common concern of scholars dedicated to all humanist disciplines, including linguistics, religion, law and politics.² He maintains that our interpretative powers are usually stimulated as we come into contact with what he calls "meaningful forms," be they linguistic symbols, human behaviour, or even fixed documents and mute remnants.³

This broad view of interpretation stems from a comprehensive outlook of what the phenomenon of meaning really "means." Semantics, as the science of meaning, has acquired in linguistic circles new connotations rendering it more general than before, but unluckily more complicated. To use Toshihiko Izutsu's words, the science concerning the phenomenon of meaning has become so wide in scope "that

¹ *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), vol. 4, p. 385.

² Emilio Betti, "Hermeneutics as the general methodology of Geisteswissenschaften," in Gayle L. Ormiston & Alan D. Schrift, eds., *The hermeneutic tradition from Aristotle to Ricoeur* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 159.

³ *Ibid.* p. 160

almost anything that may be considered to have any meaning at all is fully entitled to constitute an object of semantics.”¹

Although the term ‘hermeneutics’ is relatively new in the world of scientific research, it refers to a defined area of scholarship, that is, the textual analysis and the methods adopted in the domain of human interpretation of a given text. However, the process of understanding linguistic and non-linguistic symbols dates back to time immemorial.²

The interpretative characteristic of symbols has become at the centre of the theory of understanding or hermeneutics. Since the time of Ferdinand de Saussure, a pioneer and a well-recognized authority in the field of semantics, all the fields of humanities have become the subject matter of semantic interpretation. Thus, social, religious, and other disciplines came to be treated in the same way as linguistic texts. Going one step further, Betti views not only the text but also all meaning-full forms as object of interpretation. Many literary critics and linguists perceive the text as a system of relationships and correlated elements, and the form, as Betti declares, is

[A] homogeneous structure in which a number of perceptible elements are related to one another and which is suitable for preserving the character of the mind that created it or that is embodied in it.³

The credit for the development of the hermeneutical tradition and widening of its scope goes not only to semanticists, but also to theologians. Schleiermacher, who is considered by many as the father of modern theological hermeneutics, maintained that the act of interpretation goes beyond textual interpretation. To him, hermeneutics is an act of general understanding, which transcends linguistic and particularly philological concerns to include all the mechanisms of deriving meanings from any phenomenon whatsoever. This view was later developed further by Gadamer

¹ Toshihiko Izutso, *God and man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2002), p. 2.

² Palmer Richard. E., *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), pp.12-13

³ Betti, “Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of *Geisteswissenschaften*,” p. 160.

who turned hermeneutics into a human science concerned with all types of human understanding.¹

As to the question of what hermeneutics exactly means, a distinction between two major connotations of the term has to be drawn. The first is technical and narrow in its scope and dimensions. According to it, hermeneutics is restricted to the field of theology dealing with the formulation of rules and principles that govern Biblical interpretation. The second is literal and broader and more general. In it, hermeneutics deals with the formulation of the methodological principles of any kind of interpretation. This general meaning of the term is what allowed the German philosopher Heidegger to describe his phenomenological thinking as hermeneutical.²

Although hermeneutics still seems to be trapped in the cage of theology, and the theory of interpretation is still dominated by linguistic preoccupations, many outstanding efforts have been made to transcend the theological and linguistic boundaries that are considered as hindrances to the development of this emerging discipline. It does not, however, suggest that those exercises, undertaken to broaden the scope of hermeneutics, have resulted in the total rejection or underestimation of the role of theology and linguistics in the achievements made in the field of understanding human “understanding”. Rather, those efforts would have been vain without the assistance of outstanding achievements in theology and linguistics. Contributions of scholars towards enriching the field of hermeneutical studies by making it encompass all meaningful human activities requiring a level of scrutiny and a degree of analysis for its understanding may themselves serve as a justification for its significance.

The works of Gadamer, especially his book *Truth and Method*,³ are spectacular examples of such significant contributions in this field. While explaining the new horizons of hermeneutics, Palmer writes,

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. Translated by Joel Weinsheimer & Donald G. Marshall (London: Sheed & Ward, 1989), p. 537.

² Palmer, *Hermeneutics*, p. 3

³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 537.

The constant effort to deal with the phenomenon of understanding as it goes beyond textual interpretation gives to hermeneutics a potentially broad significance for all those disciplines customary called the humanities. Hermeneutics, when defined as the study of understanding of the works of man, transcends linguistic forms of interpretation. Its principles apply, not only to works in written form, but to any work of art.¹

The Qur'anic Phenomenon as Work of Hermeneutics

As we have already mentioned, hermeneutics virtually encompasses all the fields of human understanding. This is the reason why any act of understanding may be considered as a hermeneutical exercise. Thus, Bennabi's attempt to understand the Qur'anic phenomenon deserves to be included in the realm of hermeneutical studies.

Many Muslims may disagree with this suggestion for two reasons: 1. Hermeneutics is a Western mode of interpretation, and 2. Hermeneutics stems from the problems associated with the Bible owing to its contested historical authenticity and the controversial nature of its texts. These two reasons may lead to the suggestion that the application of the hermeneutical methodology to Islamic interpretation amounts to equating the Qur'an with the Bible.

In answering the first objection, I would say the following. Although hermeneutics is Western in its origin, Islamic theory of interpretation has addressed almost the same problems raised by Western hermeneutic theory, especially in dealing with the layers of meaning in the Qur'an and in developing the criteria needed to undertake a genuine interpretation of its discourse.² This, however, does not mean that all hermeneutical problems encountered in the context of Western culture are necessarily similar to those posed by Islamic texts.

¹ Palmer, *Hermeneutics*, p. 10.

² See for more detail, Mustapha Tajdin, "al-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī wa Mushkil al-Ta'wīl", *Islāmiyyat al-Ma'rīfah*, No. 14, 1998.

As for the second objection, the Islamic theory of interpretation is categorically distinct from its Western counterpart with regard to the problem of the authenticity of the Book. In the Islamic context, the Qur'an will always remain the Word of God. Its authenticity may hardly be questioned even in the most liberal and less conservative circles, such as the philosophers. The Qur'an is considered as original today as during the time of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him). Bennabi himself was very well aware of this essential difference between the Islamic theory of interpretation and the Western one. He said,

In a critical study of Islam, one cannot dispense with the preliminary examination of the scriptural and historical documents which can shed some light on the Qur'anic phenomenon. For Islam, this historical problem was resolved in an exceptional way.¹

He further asserted that Islam, as compared to other religions, [Is] indeed the only one whose sources were established from the beginning, at least as far as the main source - the Qur'an - is concerned. This book has had the unique privilege of being transmitted for nearly fourteen centuries without undergoing any alteration or admitting spuriousness of any kind. This has not been the case with the Old Testament in which critical studies of contemporary exegetes have recognized only one authentic Book, that of Jeremiah.²

The New Testament does not appear to be different from the Old Testament, as the Council of Nicene in 323 AC called into question much of the Biblical information for various religious considerations. Bennabi states confidently that such alteration has resulted in casting doubt on the authenticity of the remaining *Synoptic Gospels*.³

If hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation, whose function is to lay down the rules governing our ways of understanding phenomena and of interpreting them as a result of

¹ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 59.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

that understanding, Bennabi's work may, then, be considered a piece of hermeneutical work *par excellence*. He reduced our burden to search between the lines for evidence to associate his work with works of interpretation. He made it clear that in writing his book on the Qur'an he wanted to achieve two main objectives. The first objective is to enable the Muslim youth to reflect maturely on religion.¹ The second objective is to propose an appropriate reform to the old methodology of Islamic exegesis.² Although we may have some reservations regarding this immense task of reforming the whole *tafsīr* tradition by this concise book, Bennabi's work seems to have taken well with the hermeneutical enterprise, showing that the scholar intends to effect changes in the methodology of *tafsīr*.

On Meaning and Significance

In modern hermeneutics a sharp distinction between 'meaning' and 'significance' is clear. Though the two terms belong to the same semantic field, they have two different connotations. The term 'meaning' designates what a text refers to regardless of the needs of the interpreter. In other words, the meaning of a text is the basic and unchangeable import of it that is imparted to us by way of the text itself. Significance is, on the contrary, the import of the text imparted to us by way of a process of interaction between the text and its different readers. Thus, meaning revolves around the intention of the author, while significance is the contextualized meaning of the text through the process of interpretation. Hirsh is believed to be the first to point out this difference between the two terms. He wrote:

Meaning is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a peculiar sign sequence, it is what the signs represent. Significance, on the other hand, names a relationship between the meaning and a person, or a conception, or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable.³

¹ *Ibid.* p. 1.

² *Ibid.*

³ E. D. Hirsh, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press. 1967), p. 8.

This distinction is important to situate Bennabi's work within the boundaries of hermeneutics. It should be remembered here that being unaware of the theoretical principles of one's hermeneutical strategies does not imply the actual absence of such principles in the process of an 'innocent' understanding. This is akin to the fact that speaking a language without formal knowledge of its grammatical rules does not mean the nonexistence of those rules in the actual speech. This holds true for Bennabi's philosophy of understanding the revealed Text. He set out to explain the motive behind his interest in the everlasting puzzle of how to understand the Qur'an. To him, what matters is the significance not the meaning. After all there is no significance without meaning since the latter is always based on the former.

Bennabi's aim to relate the messages of the Qur'an to the changing situation of the present time tacitly includes his methodology in what is called applied interpretation,¹ which means the effort to understand a text written in the past for the purpose of transposing its meanings into the present. That is to say, to go beyond historical meanings of a document in order to grasp its significance in the context of the present interpreter. This explains why Bennabi was critical of classical methods of exegesis, especially those methods which stress the linguistic features of the Qur'anic discourse. The application oriented stand of Bennabi is disclosed in the introductory part of his book where he explains his method as analytical. This method works for a twofold aim. The first, being practical in nature, would assist the young Muslim generation influenced by the Cartesian mode of thought in their effort to "meditate seriously on the religion."²

¹ The term 'application' is not alien to the Islamic view of interpretation. Understanding the import of the Text is not performed for the sake of understanding but rather for applying the meanings of the message in the actual context. The term *ta'wīl* rendered in English as interpretation implies a sense of application. Ibn Taymiyyah lists three meanings of *ta'wīl*: the first is a mere elucidation of the connotation of the word. The second refers to the process of considering, one or more, probable meanings of a text that are more likely than others, third revolves around the application. It is the entity or the action in the external world to which an expression refers. See Tajdin: "al-Naṣṣ al-Qur'ānī wa Mushkil al-Ta'wīl."

² Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 1.

The second being methodological would suggest a timely reform in the spirit of traditional commentary.¹

Bennabi and Phenomenology

Any attempt to define the term phenomenology faces many difficulties. The reason for this is that this current of thought is not a homogeneous body, no one thinks of it as a school of thought with precise teachings and definite criteria, or a consistent worldview. It follows from this that the term phenomenology is conceived of by its proponents in different ways, and from various angles. However, the lack of a fixed definition will not prevent us from trying to grasp its general meaning. Heidegger, who is also a distinguished figure of phenomenology, provides some significant definitions of what phenomenology is about. If I were to select among those definitions, I would say, using Heidegger's words, a phenomenon is "that which shows itself".²

By adding the suffix 'logy' to the word 'phenomenon', the sum will then indicate a science that deals with the study of entities, human or otherwise, as they appear outwardly, not as they are in reality or in themselves. In other words, phenomenology is the description of things as they present themselves to the describer. This definition owes much to Kant who paved the way for Heidegger to draw his significant distinction between appearance and semblance.

Bennabi seems to have adopted the previous definition of phenomenology in his study of Qur'anic revelation. He tries to analyze it as a phenomenon, that is, as it presents itself in the Book and in the first recipient of the message, i.e., the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In his view, a phenomenon is "an event that repeatedly occurs under the same conditions with the same consequences."³

¹ *Ibid.*

² Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of the Time: Prolegomena*, translated by Theodore Kisiel (Indiana: Bloomington University Press, 1985), p. 81.

³ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 12.

The question to be raised here is the following: what distinguishes Bennabi's methodology from that of Heidegger? One of the answers we propose here is that the main difference between the two 'phenomenologies' can be found in their mutually contradictory stands towards the issue of objectivity. Before proceeding with our comparative analysis, it is appropriate to shed some light on the origins and dimensions of the problem of objectivity in the contemporary theory of interpretation. As stated by George F. Mclean, the issue of objectivity and subjectivity in the human journey to grasp meaning is trapped in a dilemma of what Parmenides called "impossible ways". Our attempts to draw out meaning from texts of any kind

"[stand] at the crossroads of objectivity and subjectivity, with the new challenges and opportunities this presents. This entails a challenge regarding the meaning of texts, profane as well as sacred, oral as well as written. If human subjectivity enters the picture, it must not be at the expense of what is truly transcendent in a culture, for then one would be faced with an impossible choice: either to reject human historicity in order to be faithful to the full sense of the text or to journey alone through time without transcendent meaning or guidance."¹

Despite the fact that the concern voiced out in this statement is, to be precise, most pertinent to the Western context, some of its aspects have been present in the hermeneutical tradition of Islam. The problem of objectivity may be deemed as a hermeneutical issue of sorts, for it is to be found in the simple but fundamental question of "what is reality?" How are we to grasp its essence? Aristotle appears to have provided one of the enduring solutions that shaped the history of human thought by its own despotic clarity. Following his materialistic view, reality can be conceived of as an independent entity. Its existence, form and structure are predetermined. Thus, human understanding of reality has to be objective and neutral. As a result of this, the book of philosophy or hermeneutics is nothing but reading from

¹ Seyed Musa Dibadj, *The Authenticity of the Text in Hermeneutics*. Preface by George F. Mclean (Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998), p. 4.

the text of reality in order to seize its objective meanings, that is, to possess knowledge about the nature of things in as such.¹

It is Kant who, according to Grondin, brought Aristotelian objectivity down by his famous distinction between reality and conception. Kant, following his cognitive inclinations, maintains that reality cannot be understood as it is, because its very existence has never been detached from the way it is already conceptualized in the human mind. This cognitive representation of reality can be summed up in Kant's expression "an object is contained under a concept".² Although this would suggest that Kant is a proponent of subjective interpretation by subordinating reality to interpretation, Kant seems to have never championed subjectivity and fluidity in his attempt to set up rules for human understanding of things. His idea of appearance was, however, later on used by Heidegger to usher in skeptical hermeneutics,³ paving the way for post-modernism to continue the project to its extreme ends.

This brief overview of the issue of objectivity is not distant from Bennabi's preoccupations and his philosophy behind *The Qur'ānic Phenomenon*. As rightly pointed out by El-Mesawi in his successful contextualization of Bennabi's book within the current trends of thought, the methodology which he applied leads to establish the authenticity of the Book. This methodology is two-dimensional: phenomenological and psychological. It represents his longing for an objective understanding of the event of revelation. His familiarity with Western schools and modes of thought enabled him to make his case and demonstrate the objectivity of the phenomenon of revelation as independent from the Prophet's self. To attain this goal he went on to critically analyze the foundations of Western thought.⁴

¹ Jean Grondin, *Sources of Hermeneutics* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 2.

² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 271.

³ Even Gadamer was critical to Heidegger's inclination towards subjectivity. He considers objectivity to be threatened by those who followed Heidegger in subordinating meaning to subjectivity. Dibadj, *The Authenticity of the Text in Hermeneutics*, p. 4.

⁴ See El-Mesawi, "Malik Bennabi's Response to Western Modernity."

The Islamic view advocated by Bennabi recognizes that meaning has an objective existence. This suggests that any text or any system of symbols intentionally structured must have certain level of meaning that is independent from both the speaker's intentions of which there is no textual evidence, and the reader's understanding which is expected to be influenced by his own prejudices and presumptions one way or another. Admitting the possibility of certainty does not mean that the Islamic view regards the symbolic system as a closed or one-sided source of meaning. Rather, it allows for openness and a multi-semantic approach. This would bring Islam close to relativism in the sense that the truth is only accessible from the angle of our vision.

Bennabi held the certitude of meaning and the transcendental nature of the Qur'an supreme in order to ensure objectivity. He tried to make full use of the psychoanalytical approach in order to establish the externality of the Qur'an vis-a-vis the Prophet's self. The Qur'an, which by itself serves as a proof of Mohammad's prophetic call, has to be dissociated from the self or the "I" of the Prophet. Thus, according to Bennabi, revelation would be conceived of as an objective reality. In order to reach this goal, we need first to prove the externality of the phenomenon of prophethood itself. For him, the main issue here "is to find out precisely whether, in reality, prophethood is something purely subjective or whether it is an objective phenomenon."¹

The Historicity of *I'jāz*

Any-one with a simple acquaintance with the literature on hermeneutics, would realize that the issue of historicity is crucial to this field of study. Bennabi was clearly aware of this problem, and this allowed him to put history as a crucial criterion for a dynamic understanding of the issues pertaining to the question of *i'jāz*, or miraculous nature and inimitability of the Qur'an. According to him, the inimitability of Qur'an in itself is a phenomenon that transcends history, that is to say, the idea of

¹ *Ibid.* p. 42

human inability to imitate the Qur'an is true. However, our understanding of the real nature of this idea is susceptible to change according to time and space. Once again the phenomenological stand is disguised here.

I'jāz is presented from two angles: one is absolute, that is, the idea *per se* or the real existence of it as it is, irrespective of our understanding of its nature, which, in turn, is conditioned by time and space. The second is how the idea of *i'jāz* is conceptualized within the context of time and space. Bennabi's strategy here is to formulate the idea of *i'jāz* as a changing concept, without running the risk of foregoing its very essence and lasting character.¹ It seems that Bennabi is an exception in holding the view that linguistic excellence and the beauty of the literary style are no more relevant to uncovering the miracle of the Qur'an. This view regards the domains of *i'jāz* as multifarious in nature. By holding such an opinion, Bennabi's aim is to overcome the shortcomings of any restriction of *i'jāz* to linguistic excellence. By this, Bennabi seems, however, to have underestimated the importance of linguistics and literary criticism for the function of *i'jāz*.

This point has been strongly and convincingly discussed by Mahmoud M. Shakir in his introduction to the Arabic version of *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*. He argued in the following manner:

As its history and literal meaning indicate, *i'jāz* was the proof of Muhammad's prophethood, that he was God's Apostle to whom the Qur'an was revealed, that the Prophet realized the inimitability of the Qur'an in the same way as those who believed in him from among his Arab kinsfolk, and that the challenge posed in the verses of the Qur'an when God says: "and yet, they [who are bent on denying the truth] assert, "[Muhammad] has invented it!" say [unto them]: "produce, then, a *sūrah* of similar merit; and [to this end] call to your aid whomever you can, other than God, if what you say is true!" (10: 38) was in fact by the words, composition and eloquence of the Qur'an, not by anything else.²

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 4-16.

² Malik Bennabi, *al-Zābirah al-Qur'āniyyah*, Trans. Abdel-Sabour Shahin (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1989), pp. 24-25.

According to Bennabi, this view is untenable. The reason is that such understanding of *i'jāz* limits the challenge posed by the Qur'an to its linguistic performance as being of a miraculous nature. This state of affairs was correct within a specific socio-cultural context in which the literary aspects and performance of language played the pivotal role in assessing the merits of any discourse. Thus, the special usage of the language as reflected in the style of the Qur'an was within this linguistic view the logical explanation of the question of how the Qur'an is inimitable and why the Arabs, whose eloquence is believed to be beyond any doubt, failed to produce a single passage similar to the style of the Qur'an despite their strong desire to refute the teachings of Muhammad. However, tremendous socio-cultural and historical changes have taken place in the Arabic context since then. The outcome of those changes can be easily summed up in an increasing deterioration of the centrality of Arabic language and eloquence in the minds of the Arabs. The literary passion was subsequently replaced by the modern scientific worldview. To use Bennabi's words:

The literary aspect of the message, which constituted the major subject of study for the classical exegetes, increasingly loses its importance in our age, which is more scientific than literary. In fact, due to our inadequate possession of the genius and spirit of the pre-Qur'anic language, we cannot evaluate pertinently the transcendence of style in the Qur'an.¹

To further consolidate his point of view on the historical nature of *i'jāz* Bennabi drew a distinction between *Jāhili* or pre-Islamic Arabic and Islamic Arabic based on some terminological and philological considerations. He is quite right in stressing the magnitude of changes the Qur'an has brought to the world-view of the Arabs through the usage of new terms freshly integrated in the vocabulary of Arabic language. Those terms pertaining especially to the domain of eschatology represent a radically new vision of things. As Bennabi puts it:

¹ *Ibid.* p. 145.

Linguistically, the Qur'an has its own terminology. Thus from the philological as well as literary point of view, this phenomenon has created a clear distinction between *Jabili* Arabic and Islamic Arabic.¹

Nevertheless, the distinction between *Jabili* and Islamic Arabic is yet to be, one can confidently say, extensively elaborated, for the usage of a few terms by the Arabs is not sufficient to make the previous distinction definitive. As made clear by the contributions of Chomsky in the field of linguistics, the deep structure of any language, which is the sum-total of an infinite number of sentences potentially existing in its grammatical system, is actually the most important part in human language. Words and terms are just the superficial level of the symbolic system.² Despite their remarkable weight in our communicative process, their importance is relative to a time and space, for they are always susceptible to change while the deeper structure forming the abstract level of a language is, as in the case of Arabic, is immune to any alteration, thereby preserving the identity of the language. Moreover, the deeper structure has a strong relationship with the way the speaker of the language looks at the world and perceives it. At this juncture, it is not easy to identify the changes in the way Arabs used their language after the advent of Islam.

Arabic poetry provides us with the evidence for this. After the period of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the four rightly guided Caliphs, the old style of poetry, though un-Islamic in some of its aspects, gained popularity again under the Umayyad rule, thus creating a clear distinction between Islam as a universal message, and Arabic language as an aspect of the Arabic culture. The influence of the vernacular has, ever since, been held back, leaving space for other modes of discourse to shape the Arab mind and determine its view to things. Thus, the new terminology introduced by the Qur'an was raised to the level of a

¹ *Ibid.* p. 147.

² See Noam Chomsky, "Language and Responsibility," in his *On Language* (New York: The New Press, 1998), especially chapter 8.

sacred language which was later alienated from the social and historical context dominated by a profane use of language.

Bennabi's call to pay attention to Qur'anic terminology is indeed worthy of consideration, for this would bring the Qur'an anew to the centre of our concerns in order to give this Book once again the prospect to shape our worldview based on its unique way of using language.

However, it is to be noted here that almost all the terms used in the Qur'an were familiar to the Arabs of the time. It therefore seems to be untenable to sustain the idea that the Qur'an used totally new terms. The introduction of new diction by the Qur'an would certainly have affected its 'Arabness', which is boosted of and advocated by the Qur'an itself. This view does not contradict with Bennabi's; rather it sheds more light on it and helps trace the elements missed so far. The use of new terms has never been something extraordinary, especially when we use terms basically related to a new domain unfamiliar, partially or totally, to the listener. The examples provided by Bennabi substantiate this view:

The philological problem which the Qur'an poses, deserves, itself, serious study. Such a study should pay careful attention to all its neologisms and technical terms, especially in the eschatological domain, which is a fertile area to measure the magnitude of the Qur'anic phenomenon.¹

What would, then, be the merit of the Qur'anic language when it uses new words related to an unfamiliar world like eschatology? It seems that Bennabi is too enthusiastic regarding this aspect of the Qur'anic miracle. This reminds us exactly of al-Jurjānī's (d. 471 or 474 AH/1078 or 1081 CE) criticisms of the traditional patterns in explaining the object of *i'jāz*. Scholars before al-Jurjānī were contented with merely showing the beauty of the Qur'anic style without providing compelling justification of why this style excels that of the Arab literary figures known for their excellent eloquence.

According to al-Jurjānī, it is not sufficient to assert that the Qur'an excels ordinary discourses; rather, the very nature and

¹ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 147.

manifestations of that excellence have also to be elucidated. In his theory of *naẓm*, he gives priority to meaning over expression, thus stripping words of any merits to be the reason for the inimitability of the Qur'an. Rather, for him, it is in the composition of words in a meaningful set of phrases that the inimitability of the Qur'an actually lies. In this view of al-Jurjānī, one may read a suggestion that even sentences of half-hearted imports cannot be considered a source of the Qur'anic excellence. The complex network of meaning that constitutes a clear worldview is the reason behind the miraculous nature of the Qur'an. To quote from *Dalā'il al-I'jāz*:

It has been made unequivocally clear that words removed from the context have no value so that to say that a word is better than the other. The merit lays in the coherence between the meaning of the word and that of the other succeeding it in the same context.¹

Accordingly, Bennabi's point lacks sound justification. He said:

This is the case, for example, with the evangelic concept of 'the kingdom of God' which was not admitted as such, but has been adapted by the Qur'an into a special form giving it its Islamic originality. The word "kingdom", [being] equivalent to the Arabic *mulk*, was assimilated in the word *ayyām* (days) by the Qur'an. By this adaptation, the Qur'an has aptly avoided the confusion which might result from the equivalence of the terms kingdom, domain, and *mulk* or creation, which would notably change the meaning of the Evangelic concept. The Qur'an has successfully rendered it with the original expression *ayyām Allāh*, which even the best of translators could not have done.²

Bennabi wants the reader to believe that the Qur'an was making a clever, let's say miraculous, translation of the Evangelical term "kingdom of God" into Arabic. Although this approach by Bennabi remains to be proved, it does however shed some light on the impetus behind his hermeneutics. The

¹ 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-I'jāz*, ed. Mahmoud Mohammad Shakir (Cairo: Dār al-Madani, 1992), p. 46.

² Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 148.

challenges posed by Western thought to the Muslim mind, and colonization which was the clearest manifestation of Western superiority, seem to have had a major influence on Bennabi's hermeneutic orientation. He saw that the superiority of Western thought had to be challenged by demonstrating the superiority of the Qur'an over the Bible which had been used by the colonial administration to assure smooth and total control of the Western powers over Muslim countries.

However, the worldview of the Qur'an is not determined by the famous duality of Toynbee: challenge and response. It is rather structured around a new duality that is: "confirming the truth of whatever there still remains of earlier revelations, and determining what is true therein." (Q. 5: 48). It is true that the Qur'an does not avoid using Evangelic words by rendering their contents in a new composition, yet there is not any justification why it should, as Bennabi suggests, render "the kingdom of God" into "*ayyām Allāh*".

The justification provided by Bennabi is yet to be substantiated. He maintains that the usage of the word *ayyām Allāh* would avoid the confusion that might arise from the equivalence of the terms kingdom, domain, and *mulk*. If this was the reason, the Qur'an would not have used *mālik* and *mālik al-mulk* in other contexts. However, the root *malaka* is used with its derivatives in a relatively remarkable frequency with all its connotations related to domination, power and authority. In my humble view, the expression *ayyām Allāh* rather follows in line with previously established formulas such as the expression *ayyām al-ʿArab* is well known in pre-Islamic Arabic. It connotes the same meaning intended by the Qur'an with a difference in what the word *ayyām* refers to.

The philosophy behind this usage, I would like to propose, is that the pagan Arabs admitted the existence of God but without granting Him any authority or capability of directing their lives so that they would have to comply with His commands. The word *ayyām* had a concrete and significant meaning in the Arabian context to the extent that the collective memory of any tribe is

called *ayyām* and the battle is also called *yawm* (day). This means that the word *ayyām* summarizes all the significant events and major experiences associated with Arab tribes. The Qur'an made use of this novel metaphor: *ayyām Allāh* (days of God) to tell the Arabs that it is He who controls history and that He also has His *ayyām* consisting of the victory of the divine teaching through the sincere believers. It seems that the coinage of this new metaphor was meant to emphasize God's presence in human history, thus removing the distorted pre-Islamic concept of the Divinity.

Conclusion

The Qur'anic Phenomenon is a significant attempt to deal with the miraculous nature of the glorious Book within a new methodological framework. This endeavour is an integrated approach to the phenomenon of revelation. It is through this approach that Islamic disciplines and social sciences converge to unfold the reality of the Qur'an. We undoubtedly remain indebted to this pioneering effort in our journey to approach the religious phenomenon in all its dimensions and manifestations. As has been pointed out above, Bennabi's work has both its merits and demerits, and only through a critical, unbiased and objective assessment thereof may the reader be able to truly benefit from it.

CHAPTER 3

The Story of Joseph between The Torah and The Qur'an: A Critical Assessment of Malik Bennabi's Narrative¹

Ibrahim M. Zein

Introduction

Malik Bennabi's book *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*² can surely be seen as the most important work written about the Qur'an in the 20th century. Although this work is apparently on the methodology of understanding and appreciating the Qur'anic text, much of Bennabi's contribution could be attributed to both his line of argument and narrative verve. Bennabi's call to apply the phenomenological method in the study of the Qur'an may not seem to set a new direction or bring in an innovation in Islamic scholarship. This is because phenomenology as a method in religious studies was well known in the history of Islamic scholarship. However, Bennabi's original con-

¹ Quite a number of studies have been done comparing Biblical narratives with the Qur'anic ones. See for example, John Kaltner, *Inquiring of Joseph: Getting to Know a Biblical Character through the Qur'an* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003). However, it is important to keep in mind that the author does not seem to be well informed about the Qur'anic narrative. Also see also Nora Sued Iqbal, "The Story of Yusuf in the Qur'an and the Bible: A Comparative Analytical Study" (unpublished Master Dissertation, IIUM 2004).

² Bennabi's work on the Qur'an, originally written in French, was first published in 1947 under the title *Le Phénomène Coranique: Essai d'une Théorie sur le Coran*. In 1959, it was translated into Arabic by Abdel-Sabur Shahin under the author's supervision. It was published in Cairo under the title *al-Zāhirah al-Qur'āniyyah*, and included a considerably expanded preface by the author. An English translation was done by Abu Bilal Kirkari and published in 1983. Another fully annotated and documented translation by Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi was published in 2001 under the title *The Qur'anic Phenomenon: an Essay of a Theory on the Qur'an*. – Editor.

tribution lies in applying it specifically to the Qur'an as well as in the narrative strategies and comparative style he developed based on it.

This chapter focuses on chapters 13 and 14 of his book. In these two chapters, Bennabi's narrative reached its climax. In fact, he was able to reconstruct a balanced picture of the story of Joseph in both the Torah and the Qur'an. While the language of difference is not overemphasized, the uniqueness of the Qur'anic account of the story of Joseph would absolutely be realized. It is indeed a difficult task for a Muslim scholar to investigate the Qur'anic phenomenon in comparison with the Biblical tradition without compromising his faith or objectivity. The present writer claims that Bennabi's narrative and comparative mode of analysis were behind his in-depth study of the Qur'anic phenomenon.

To achieve this goal a number of issues need to be clarified, and a considerable attention has also to be given to the problem of textual strategies, narrative and meta-narrative.

The context of the Book

The Qur'anic Phenomenon, as the author tells us, was written twice in its original French version. The first version was lost owing to unfortunate circumstances during the Second World War.¹ It should be pointed out that Bennabi was completely unsatisfied with the present form of the book, yet a careful reading of the context in which the first version was written would help us to visualize the essence of the textual strategies he had followed. More specifically, it has been suggested that the narrative in the first form was likely to be addressed to both Muslim youth who were influenced by the West, and non-Muslims who increasingly became part of the debate on religion and modernity. Perhaps, the first form of the book was essentially based on reflections concerning the challenges that he faced when, out of necessity, he became a member of the Christian Youth Organization in Paris. During that time, one can say, he became familiar with the Judaeo-

¹ Bennabi has mentioned this in the book's introduction (p. 1). See also the corresponding translator's note. – Editor.

Christian tradition. As he recollected in his autobiography, he had learned discussions with the leaders of that organization.¹ Thus, it might be attributed to this period that he became fully aware of the challenges of both Judaeo-Christian tradition and modernity to Islam. Since this analysis is primarily focusing on the narrative in Bennabi's text, it is important to know the context in which this book was written. This is because the context will certainly explain to us the possible reasons behind the specific strategies that the author adopted in his narrative.

The second time the book was reorganized, reconstructed and almost written anew by Bennabi was during his stay in Egypt in the late fifties and early sixties when the book was translated into Arabic.² Although he voiced his dissatisfaction with the present form of the book, the depth of the argument and the religious imagination reflected in the text is beyond the reach of an isolated Muslim intellectual in Paris during the forties. Thus, his assertion that, "In its present form, it does not satisfy the original idea we formulated concerning the problem of the Qur'an",³ should not be taken literally but rather it reflected the new orientation within which the text was written. As he stated, the essence of his original text was to establish "an analytical method for the study of the Qur'anic phenomenon."⁴ Then, he elaborated that the practical objective of his work is both to furnish Muslim youth with new theoretical orientation in understanding religion, and to suggest a

¹ Malik Bennabi, *Mudhakkirāt Shāhid lil-Qarn* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1404/1984), pp. 208-213.

² Though the general impression upon reading the Arabic translation of Bennabi's book may testify to this assertion, yet the translator of the English version is of the opinion that this is utterly inaccurate. Thus, the truth lies in between these two positions. - Author.

This note by the author and its corresponding contention in the main text is totally unfounded. As a simple comparison between the original French text of Bennabi's book and its Arabic translation compellingly shows, there is no question of "reorganization" or "restructuring" of the book. The only difference lies in the expanded introduction to the Arabic version in which Bennabi developed and elaborated some methodological and historical points that he only slightly touched upon in the French original. This expanded introduction has been incorporated integrally in the English translation of the book done by me. I am therefore astonished at Professor Zein's insistence on this fanciful invention despite a long argument with him. - Editor.

³ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

methodological reform in Qur'anic exegesis that would redefine the meaning of *i'jāz* (inimitability of the Qur'an).¹

As is clear from Bennabi's introduction to the book, he was well aware of Taha Hussain's thesis in his famous book on pre-Islamic Arabic poetry² published in 1926 and of the heated debate it instigated in Egypt's intellectual community. Hussain applied the Cartesian method of systematic doubt to the question the originality and reality of pre-Islamic Arabic *jāhili* poetry and subsequently instigated an intellectual uproar in the Arab world. His main thesis is that this poetry was a post-Islamic invention, thus echoing the view expressed by the Orientalist David Margoliouth two years earlier.³

Although Bennabi made a direct reference to that book in his work in its present form,⁴ his contribution to the debate it created was a learned rather than a sensational response.⁵ He skillfully

¹ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n. d.), pp. 116-125.

² Taha Hussain, *Fī al-Shi'r al-Jāhili* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1926). Since then the book has been reprinted in different places in the Arab world, the latest being by Dār al-Ma'ārif, Sousse, Tunisia.

³ On Margoliouth's and other Orientalists' studies and views on the authenticity of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry see, Abdel-Rahman Badawi, *Dirāsāt al-Mustashriqīn Ḥawla Ṣiḥḥat al-Shi'r al-Jāhili*, a compilation of articles translated from German, English, and French (Beirut: Dār al-Ilm li'l-Malāyīn, 1979).

⁴ Bennabi's reference to Taha Hussain's book and the debate it instigated already figures in the original French version published in 1947 and was not an Egyptian discovery as the author seems to suggest. - Editor

⁵ When Taha Hussain published his book in 1926, he had anticipated the controversy it would create. Prominent Arab litterateurs and Islamic scholars participated in that debate, such as Mustafa Sadiq al-Rafī'ī (*Taḥṭā Rāyat al-Qur'an* [Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 2001] and Muhammad al-Khidr Hussain [*Naqḍ Kitāb Fī al-Shi'r al-Jāhili*, in *Mawsū'at al-A'māl al-Kāmilah li'l-Imām Muḥammad al-Khidbr Hussain*, compiled and edited by Ali Ridha al-Hussaini, Damascus/Kuwait/Beirut: Dār al-Nawādir, 1431/2010, vol. 8]). It should be acknowledged that he collected a number of valuable documents that reflected both the intellectual and political atmosphere in Egypt during 1920s. In the introduction to his *Dirāsāt al-Mustashriqīn Ḥawla Ṣiḥḥat al-Shi'r al-Jāhili* (Beirut: Dār al-Ilm li'l-Malāyīn, 1979), Abdel-Rahman Badawi indicated his dismay regarding some of the responses to Taha Hussain's book. Perhaps Nasir al-Din al-Asad made his all academic reputation by refuting Taha Hussain's thesis. See, Nasir al-Din al-Asad, *Maṣādir al-Shi'r al-Jāhili wa Qimātuhā al-Tārikhiyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 6th edition, 1982), and *Nash'at al-Shi'r al-Jāhili wa Taṭawwruḥ: Dirāsah fī al-Manhaj* (Beirut: al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabiyyah li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr, 1999). It should equally be re-

redirected the debate into a real challenge to modernity and equally to open a new discourse in the study of the religious phenomenon.

One can say that Bennabi's conception of the problem of *i'jāz* and its wider context of Qur'anic exegesis became directly related to his thesis on the Qur'an after his intellectual engagement on the issue of pre-Islamic poetry. It should be noted that the narrative in the introduction of the book was adjusted to include both the content and implication of the issue on his major thesis on the Qur'anic phenomenon. It might equally be true to suggest that while in Paris Bennabi was concerned with convincing both Muslims and non-Muslims of the relevance of the Qur'an to the religious phenomenon in human history. However, when in Cairo, Bennabi's audience was two types of Muslims, those with "a mind of Cartesian bent" at the level of the intellectual elite, and those who espouse popular ideas at the level of laymen.¹ This is apparent in his theory of social change wherein he identified two separate levels: intellectual and popular. In his view, any learned discussion geared towards formulating a new method of understanding *i'jāz* and suggesting a modification in the system of Qur'anic exegesis had to keep in mind the sensibilities of these two levels; otherwise its message would not filter very well and penetrate all the layers of the social fabric.²

Accordingly, he tried at once to redefine the meaning of *i'jāz* and modify the system of Qur'anic exegesis by utilizing the issue of pre-Islamic poetry. Obviously, the connection between pre-Islamic poetry and Cartesian method is highly visible. But Bennabi's

marked that after the issue of *i'jāz* and its relationship with the controversy of *al-Shi'r al-Jabīlī* as a new controversy emerged out of the discussion concerning the historicity of the Qur'anic stories. See Muhammad Ahmad Khalaf Allah, *al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣī fī al-Qur'an al-Karīm* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglū al-Miṣriyya, 4th edition, 1972).

¹ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 5.

² For more details on these issues, see: Malik Bennabi, *The Question of Ideas in the Muslim World*, Trans. Mohamed El-Tahir El-Messawi (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2003); Mohamed El-Tahir El-Messawi, *A Muslim Theory of Human Society: An Investigation into Sociological Thought of Malik Bennabi* (Batu Caves/Selangor: Thinker's Library, 1998); Fawzia Bariun, *Malik Bennabi: His life and Theory of Civilization* (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 1993); and Badrane Bin al-Hassan, *al-Zāhirah al-Gharbiyyah fī al-Wa'y al-Ḥaḍārī: Unmūdḥaj Malik Bennabi* (Doha: Kitāb al-Umma, 2000).

narrative suggested that the deep meaning of the issue is much less about pre-Islamic poetry than about the challenge of modernity that had to be addressed by a new approach and included a set of strategies for social change. Clearly, the Egyptian context was far more complex than the French one with regard to this issue. Though Bennabi would make us believe that the original idea of his book was retained with less sophistication and, perhaps, with lack of documentation, the most significant development in the present form of his text is that it reflected the depth of the intellectual crisis in Egypt at that time. His real contribution was both to understand that crisis and to suggest a learned methodological reform in Qur'anic exegesis that required a new set of tools. It can be argued that the present form of the book might fit neatly into the previous analysis compared with the French form which was published in Algiers, but certainly the lost original text, which had been written in French, was considered by Bennabi as far more complex and represented the original idea.

Whatever might be the case, the fact remains that the present form of the text addresses the complexities of Islam and modernity in Egypt and the Muslim world. Most importantly, perhaps, the battleground for such an intellectual endeavour was neither Paris nor Algeria during that era. As the literary theory of *i'jāz* was already out on a limb compared with the new position suggested by Bennabi, Sayyid Qutb had developed a new literary approach that was gaining momentum among Muslim intellectuals.¹ However, when comparing the two contributions, Bennabi's approach seems to be more fundamental in its response to the basic postulates of modernity.

Distinctive Features of the Comparison

As indicated above, this chapter focuses mainly on the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Bennabi's work. After justifying the

¹ See especially Sayyid Qutb, *al-Taḥwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1980) and *Mashāhid al-Qiyāmah fī al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1983). According to al-Khalidi, these two works were first published in 1945 and 1947 respectively. Salah Abdulfattah al-Khalidi, *Sayyid Qutb* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2000), pp. 365-379.

selection of Surah Yūsuf in the Qur'an and the chapter of Joseph in the Torah, Bennabi set out to outline the scope of comparison between the two accounts as well as the main parallels and the textual strategies he would follow. He endeavoured to put together the Qur'anic world and the Biblical one in such a way that the story of Joseph would serve as a prototype narrative. It should be remembered that the Qur'anic narrative of the story of Joseph, unlike the Biblical one, is complete beginning-to-end narrative in one place. The rest of the shared Biblical and Qur'anic stories were retold in the Qur'an in different places whenever the context of the *sūrah* requires the details of the story to be included, thematic aspect to be played down and the relevant parallel stories to be added to the overall narrative.

Although the Qur'an narrated the story of both Abraham and Moses with elaborate details, yet their stories were not confined to one *sūrah*. Therefore, they would certainly not satisfy the criteria of beginning-to-end narrative, and this is reason they were not chosen for the subject of this comparison. Thus, the very idea of a comparison between beginning-to-end narratives will not be maintained in such cases. Admittedly, the choice of the story of Yūsuf is, to say the least, a learned one. It served the purpose of the comparison and equally helped in developing Bennabi's argument to its logical consequences.

Structure of the Narrative

Bennabi tried to put together, in a comparative style, the story of Yūsuf in the Qur'an and the chapter on Joseph in the Torah. It was his prerogative to decide where to start the story of Joseph in the Torah. This is because the story of Joseph in the Torah is essentially part of the story of Jacob. Thus, he chose to start it with Genesis 37:2. It could be argued that Bennabi could have chosen Genesis 30:22, which reads, "Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. 23 And she conceived and bore a son, and said 'God has taken away my reproach. 24 So, she called his name Joseph'", as the beginning of the narrative

instead of Genesis 37:2, which reads, "This is the history of Jacob, Joseph being seventeen."

Nevertheless, a careful reading of this beginning of the story in the Bible and its Qur'anic counterpart would reveal that both narratives more or less started at that point of time in Joseph's life. While Bennabi decided to make the beginning of the *sūrah* as the beginning of the Qur'anic starting point of the narrative, it seemed that the real beginning of Joseph's narrative in the Torah was within the family of Jacob when he became seventeen. That which was mentioned before that was not specifically about Joseph; it is rather about Jacob's family. The Qur'anic beginning is much more a cosmic beginning rather than a family affair. While the Biblical narrative overemphasized the particular human predicament, its Qur'anic counterpart underlined the cosmic and universal setting of the story.

Although Bennabi made the beginning of *sūrah* Yūsuf the beginning of his narrative in the comparison, he did not make the end of the *sūrah* (Q., 12:111) the end of the narrative; he rather decided to make the verse No. 101 of the *sūrah* the natural end of the Yūsuf narrative. This meant the omission of the last nine verses from the comparison. One could suggest that though these last verses are part and parcel of the narration of the *sūrah*, they are equally not directly relevant to the story of Yūsuf. Whereas the beginning of the *sūrah* was included for both its relevance and its cosmic setting that befitted the theme of the Qur'anic narrative, the message at end of the *sūrah* was more relevant to the Muslim situation in Makkah. Thus, the beginning was included for its relevance; and the closing verses of the *sūrah* were excluded from the comparison owing to their being relevant to something other than themselves. As far as the Biblical version of the story is concerned, Bennabi chose to end the story with Genesis 47:1, which reads "Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers", which is quite parallel to the Qur'anic ending.

Event wise, the Qur'anic ending came immediately after Yūsuf's comment on the realization of his dream. As the Qur'an recounts it:

O my Sustainer, Thou hast indeed bestowed upon me something of power, and hast imparted unto me some knowledge of the inner meaning of happenings. Originator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art near unto me in this world and in the life to come: let me die as one who has surrendered himself unto Thee and make me one with the righteous. (Q., 12:101)

By contrast, the Biblical ending at the same point in the sequence of events trickled and continued into minute details that are highly unlikely to be part of the story of Joseph.

It seems that Bennabi's decision to select a viable structure for the two narratives was largely based on his understanding of the centrality of Joseph's dream, as if the real beginning of the narrative was the dream and the end of the story was the realization of that dream. With this criterion Bennabi's choice determined where to make the boundaries of the beginning-ending-narrative in each version. Perhaps, one could suggest, the natural setting of each version will equally justify the starting point and the relevant end. While the family is the main setting for the Biblical narrative – and it is important here to follow Bennabi's selection which reflected that dimension – the Qur'anic account painted a cosmic and universal meaning for the story which led Bennabi to follow that direction. It should be remembered that both versions had more or less a parallel structure that included similar sets of events. It should also be emphasized that Bennabi's choice of the structure of the comparison was determined by both a textual strategy and an in-depth understanding of the scope of the two versions of the story. Thus, the denouement of the Qur'anic version is befitting the central character.

The Content of the Narrative

Chapter fourteen of Bennabi's book is completely devoted to an analysis of the two versions. Most importantly, his analysis is solely based on a detailed comparison of an interpretation of the content of the two versions. Though Bennabi decided to make the Qur'anic version the focal point of his comparison, considerable attention was paid to both the basic structure and the details of the Biblical narrative. Rather than being a creation of a design where the Biblical

version will be at a disadvantage when compared to the Qur'anic one, it followed a textual strategy that tends to make the comparison more focused and meaningful. Understandably, in such a design of items of comparison, the author should make a number of choices. These choices, however, will ultimately affect the outcome of the comparison in general. But the real test of the meaningfulness of the whole process should be based on the ability of the design to explain both the differences and similarities according to the parameters of the central message of both the Torah and the Qur'an.

In making the Qur'anic narrative the yardstick of his comparison, Bennabi outlined the series of events of the two narratives around his own interpretation of the essence of the account of the two versions. The decision to divide the Qur'anic narrative into thirty sub-divisions clearly reflected that essential understanding of what should constitute the main plot and how it developed into a full-fledged narrative. These sub-divisions comprise of different length passages ranging from one to ten Qur'anic verses. It may be assumed that there was an underlying logic behind making these sub-divisions into separate yet related units. Notably, the general line of the narrative was unbroken and the whole structure of the comparison seemed to follow an undeclared system. Out of the eleven sections in Genesis, Bennabi chose only eight for the comparison in chapter thirteen of his book; moreover, he considered only section 38 to be irrelevant to the comparison.¹ Thus, the total number of Biblical verses which were used directly or indirectly in the comparison is approximately three hundred and thirty seven, while the number of Qur'anic verses is 101. This underscores the complexity of the design for the comparison. It also vividly shows how Bennabi managed to work out a set of meaningful contrasts without being accused of bias and sheer subjectivity. It should be remembered that an element of subjectivity is inevitable in such a design. Quite obviously, this process of comparison is essentially based on an inter-subjective sensibility that will ultimately be appreciated by those who adhere either to the Qur'anic or Biblical tradition.

¹ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, pp. 167-214.

In working out a set of criteria for his comparison, Bennabi used phrases like 'difference', 'absent', 'variance', 'same' and 'similar account'. Although he did not define the meaning of each term, a careful look into them within the context of the comparison reveals both the meaning and function of these terms. The structure of the comparison seemed to be simple and concise. He sequentially referred to the number of Qur'anic verses in the table of comparison, summarized them, summarized the relevant Biblical ones if there are any, and then made his remarks on that specific subdivision of the Qur'anic verses. Certainly, this type of textual strategy helped Bennabi to reorganize the Qur'anic narrative into a design that took into account the Biblical version.

A summary of Bennabi's table of comparison revealed to us that out of the thirty Qur'anic subdivisions used in the comparison, the term "difference" appeared in the section of remarks ten times, whereas in the section of the Biblical version the term "absent" appeared fourteen times. Only twice terms like "same" or "similar account" appeared in the section of Biblical version, while terms like "variance" or "with some variation" appeared in the same section. The remaining Qur'anic subdivisions consisted of verse fifty-four and verses sixty-three to sixty-seven. Regarding verses 64-67, it seemed that Bennabi did not want to admit the apparent similarity between them and their Biblical counterpart, whereas he was less inclined to emphasize the difference in respect of verse 54. Though this apparatus of comparison showed the enormity of the difference between the two versions of the story, the possibility of a shared structure was equally highlighted. Therefore, this design of comparison emphasized the difference between the two versions within a matrix of a shared structure.

In addition to the table of comparison in chapter fourteen, Bennabi pointed to the main similarity between the two versions. He said, "The plot of the story is the same in both versions."¹ But

¹ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 215. See Aristotle, *De Poetica* (Poetics). Trans. by Ingram Bywater, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House [by arrangement with the Oxford University Press], 1941), pp.1455-1487.

he equally cautioned us against overemphasizing this apparent similarity; “However, even a cursory examination will reveal certain special elements that characterize each version.”¹ Immediately after this indication of both similar and peculiar elements within that general plot, Bennabi set out to highlight the major differences between the two accounts in order to emphasize both the divine origin of the Qur’anic text and its compatibility with historical facts. For him, the Qur’anic account “breathes throughout with an unmistakable spirituality that one can feel in the words and acts of the personages depicted in the Qur’anic scene.”²

With an insightful analysis of the main Qur’anic characters in the story of Yūsuf, Bennabi succeeded to draw our attention to this significant difference between the two versions of the story. While in the Qur’anic account both Jacob and Joseph spoke and behaved like prophets, the Biblical version played down this crucial dimension in their characters. Even Potiphar’s wife in the Qur’anic narrative behaved in such a way that was more plausible and essentially consistent with the spiritual atmosphere generated by the sequence of the events. As Bennabi stated, “Potiphar’s wife herself speaks in a language befitting a human conscience won over by repentance and vanquished by the innocence and integrity of a victim: the sinner finally confesses her guilt and makes her *mea culpa*.”³

On the one hand, Bennabi’s main line of comparison with regard to the Qur’anic account highlighted the element of spirituality in its narrative; while on the other, he pointed to the glaring historical mistakes of the Biblical version. In his opinion, “the Biblical version exhibits some anachronisms, which rather confirm the apocryphal character of the passage in question.”⁴ Furthermore, the Biblical version fond of minute and rather insignificant details succeeded to create a narrative that dotted all “I’s” and crossed all “T’s”. By contrast, the Qur’anic version was more focused on the central character, Joseph. Above all, it should

¹ Bennabi, *The Qur’anic Phenomenon*, p. 215.

² *Ibid.* p. 215.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 215-216.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 216.

be pointed out that despite all these differences between the two versions, Bennabi's main assumption is much less based on the differences than on the striking similarities between the Qur'anic and the Biblical traditions. It should be pointed out that Bennabi's table of comparison, although riddled with verbal assertions that indicate the language of difference, the main textual strategy he followed was to retain the Qur'anic uniqueness within the wider context of monotheism, and the monotheistic context had different historical manifestations of which both the Qur'an and the Bible were particular versions.

It seems that Bennabi was quite aware of the implications of a line of comparison that resulted in overemphasizing the differences between the two versions, as was the case of his table of comparison. But it is equally correct that what he made out of these differences in his textual strategy pointed to the fact that these differences are essentially indicators of an original source. This suggests the importance of understanding the striking similarities between the two versions not as mere borrowings, but rather as separate and different manifestations of one and the same origin. This way of making sense of the similarities and differences was one way of understanding monotheistic traditions on a different plane. Bennabi claims that it has completely trivialized the influence or borrowing theories advocated by my European Orientalists. Evidently, it has substituted the sheer and naïve recourse to borrowing theories with an in-depth analysis of the content of the narrative within a context that keeps us well informed about historical and psychological facts. As a result, his line of analysis opened a new realm of possibilities that have more explanatory power.

Working with the issues of similarities and differences that are cutting across notions of borrowings, uniqueness and inter-textual relationships, Bennabi decided to transcend all of them. Thus, he proposed an original source of which both the Qur'anic and Biblical accounts are particular manifestations. This position might seem to be rather problematic for those who champion positivism and tend to any metaphysical assumptions. But

Bennabi spares no discard time to completely disassociate any metaphysical dimension from his proposal of the possibility of original source. In a Cartesian discourse, this possibility seems to be more plausible and within the realm of what could be perceived clearly and distinctly.

For Bennabi, since the Biblical narrative of the story suffers from glaring inconsistencies with the well-established historical facts, it must cede to an original source. This is because these historical mistakes are largely due to back projection by scribes who, owing to their experience of slavery in Egypt, imposed the dichotomy of Hebrews versus Egyptians on the narrative. Such dichotomy, however, did not exist during the time of Joseph. During that era, it is equally true that an animal like the donkey could not have been part of the domesticated animals of the Children of Israel. Even worse, it is inconceivable that it was used by the sons of Jacob for crossing the desert from Palestine to Egypt. He, therefore, considers all these errors to be the product of careless scribes who would like to read everything from their limited perspective. Making this remark as clear as it should be in his analysis of the Biblical narrative, Bennabi's postulate of an original source seems to be one plausible possibility that a Cartesian mind should not reject.¹

In his analysis of the two versions of the story, there is an unmistakable determination to sell this postulate of an original source to those with "a mind of a Cartesian bent."² Nothing, however trivial or insignificant, is left out or unutilized in this endeavour. Moreover, one has to admit that Bennabi's main focus in the comparison was not on these details, but on the main theme on the scriptures. This essence is repeatedly captured in his emphasis of spirituality in the characters of Jacob, Joseph and the wife of Potiphar. Undoubtedly, the absence of this theme in the Biblical narrative renders it more reflective of the perspective of the scribe who was increasingly locked in the history of Jacob's family rather than establishing a cosmic or a universally guided narrative.

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 215-231.

² *Ibid.* p. 5.

Obviously, an argument that is essentially based on similarities and differences can always be categorized as speculative in nature. However, the main content in Bennabi's analysis is much less about similarities and differences than about how to make sense of them. Therefore, the real value of his discourse is much more about the new possibilities of seeing the relationship between the Qur'anic and Biblical accounts within a wider monotheistic tradition. It is beyond the point here to raise the issue of subjectivity against Bennabi's narrative in order to undermine its logical value. What needs to be emphasized is the usefulness of his narrative in organizing and understanding the relationship between these two versions of the same story. Most important is how this will help us to transcend the hubris of borrowing theories and how it equally opens new sensibilities of understanding the relationship between the Qur'an and the Bible. Though the similarities and differences are not all together given facts, what we make of them is equally not completely speculative in nature. If it has been given any importance in the discourse, the minimization of speculation will basically depend upon the plausibility of the narrative and its explanatory power.¹

Apparently, the comparison between the two versions started with the assumption that it is possible to identify the story of Joseph in both the Qur'an and the Bible. Even though there is such a thing as "the story of Joseph", the identification of its boundaries is extremely difficult. It becomes even more difficult when this identification is meant for creating a parallel structure in the two scriptures. Certainly, the criteria that make the story of Joseph as one single narrative in the Qur'an are not the same as those that mark the boundaries of the same story in the Bible. It is because of this problem that Bennabi decided to make the content of the story of Joseph centre around the realization of the dream. This identification of the essence of the story allowed him to transform the structure of the beginning-to-end narrative into an end-to-end narrative. It made the story to start with the dream and

¹ Muhammad Meftah, *al-Talaqqī wa al-Ta'wīl* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-ʿArabī, 1994), pp.142-144

to finish up with the realization of that dream as a final event. This cycle of narrative might seem to be a meaningful structure and have its justification in the Qur'ānic narrative, where the story started with the dream and the sequence of events culminated in its realization.

Accordingly, working out a parallel structure from the Biblical narrative was part of a systematic design. Obviously, this made the process of identification of the boundaries of the story within each tradition to be based on a cycle of events that strictly followed the narration of the dream and ended with its realization. It certainly redefined the meaning of end-to-end narrative within a realm that equally redefined the relationship between the seen and the unseen. Although this arrangement of the story might seem to be convenient, it certainly captured the essence of the human drama in relation to the Absolute, in which the seemingly beginning-to-end narrative was turned into an end-to-end narrative. It is a narrative where the cycle of events started with a dream/unseen and ended up with the realization of the dream/seen. Between the unseen and the seen the human drama unfolded into a particular sequence of events. As it clearly appears, this particularization of events within that well-defined framework was the target of Bennabi's comparative strategy.

The Place of the Qur'anic Phenomenon in the History of Revelation

Bennabi argued that, owing to specific historical and cultural developments in the Muslim world, the issue of *i'jāz* could not be looked at solely from a linguistic perspective. This necessitated both a new formulation of the problem and a new approach to the issue of *i'jāz*. Time and again, he reminded us that these considerations "cannot be separated from the general history of the prophetic movement and Divine religions."¹ Then, he explained the details of his methodological stand by saying,

¹ Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, p. 7.

In other words, we shall link the particular case of Islam to the religious phenomenon in general. The Qur'an's aim is to place its messenger as the ultimate link in the chain of prophetic movement and to place the teachings of the Qur'an as the culmination of the stream of monotheistic thought.¹

This methodological strategy meant, among other things, locating both the messenger and the message in the history of revelation and the prophetic movement as part and parcel of their unfolding. It started with the assumption that the contemporary Arabs have lost the natural disposition of linguistic taste. Even worse, the technical meaning of *i'jāz*, which is essentially based on the acquired faculty of discerning what is aesthetically excellent from what is not, is no longer part of the main stream of the educational system. It is rather the monopoly of a very few. In such a situation, Bennabi felt the urgent need for a reformulation of the question that takes into account the development of the meaning of *i'jāz* from a simple lexical meaning to a technical one; a reformulation that should take into account the historical dimension. Where the simple and direct way of interacting with the message of the Qur'an was the gift of eloquence which was a feature of the Arabs' natural disposition, later, during the Abbasid era, this superb taste of eloquence was turned into a craft. Thus, as Bennabi pointed out, the interaction of both 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah belong to the first category, whereas al-Jāhīz' and al-Jurjānī's accounts belong to the second one. Now, Bennabi argued that nothing of the position of the previous two categories could be maintained with the same meaningfulness.

It is because of this state of affairs, and for which he took the trouble to analyze the historical development that led to this situation, that a new method and understanding of the problem of *i'jāz* needed to be developed. One possible way was to look into the Qur'an for a better understanding of the meaning of *i'jāz*. According to Bennabi, one meaning of *i'jāz* that seemed to be of a universal value and certainly not limited to the subjective taste of

¹ *Ibid.*

eloquence is the historical type of *i'jāz*. In this connection, he mentioned the hadith of the Prophet in which he says,

*Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believe, but what I have been given is Divine Inspiration (wahy), which God has revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of other Prophets on the Day of Resurrection.*¹

In the light of this Prophetic tradition, Bennabi gave the following interpretation of *i'jāz*:

This means that we need to conceive the meaning of *i'jāz* in relation to its meaning in the monotheistic religions as a whole.²

In addition to this, he felt that he found a clue to solving the problem of *i'jāz* in the following Qur'anic verse:

*Say: "I am not the first of [God's)] messengers; and [like all of them], I do not know what will be done with me or with you: for I am nothing but a plain warner. (Q., 46:9)*³

Bennabi went on to argue based on this verse by saying,

Considering this verse as a proof (*Hujja*) furnished by the Qur'an for the Prophet to use in his argument with the polytheists, we can reflect on its logical content from two different angles.⁴

Accordingly, he suggested that the significance of this Qur'anic verse lies in two important things: 1. It implicitly established the principle that the repetition of the phenomenon under certain circumstances confirms its truth; 2. It established the existence of the clear relationship between the messengers and the messages throughout the ages, and that the message of Prophet Muhammad is nothing but one of those messages. Thus, it must be governed by the same criteria. This will obviously establish a dialectical relationship between the message of the Qur'an and those that preceded it, and it can serve as a tool to verify their

¹ *Ibid.* p. 7.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*

truthfulness and vice versa. Then, Bennabi went on to explain the implications of his interpretation of the Qur'anic verse on the meaning of *i'jāz*,

This would suggest that if we look at an event in terms of its repeated occurrence, that is as a phenomenon, *i'jāz* would constitute: 1. For the Prophet, the proof (*Hujja*)... 2. For Religion one of the means for its conveyance and communication (*tabligh*).¹

Accordingly, these two characteristics of *i'jāz* point to the following dimensions: 1. that the proof furnished by *i'jāz* must be comprehensible to everybody; 2. that the propagation of religion through *i'jāz* must be beyond the power of everyone; and 3. that the impact of *i'jāz* must be relevant with regard to time and history. The third aspect is illustrated by Bennabi based on an analysis of the element of *i'jāz* in both Judaism and Christianity. Moreover, he was at his best in working out the implications of his method in studying monotheistic religions from a comparative perspective. Though his focus was on the issue of *i'jāz*, the line of argument and the depth of analysis could be extended to other issues of comparison.²

It is evident that Bennabi made a strong case for the new understanding of *i'jāz*. Most importantly, the discussion of the religious phenomenon was made part and parcel of any serious scientific inquiry. The validity of a religious claim was no longer based upon a subjective act of belief, but it was supported by an historical analysis of the phenomenon. Likewise, he turned the metaphysical issue of belief into a subject of historical investigation. In the case of the Qur'anic phenomenon, the emphasis is much less on the subjective taste of language than on an elaborate analysis of the history of monotheism that requires a deep understanding of Biblical archeology, the languages of scriptures and a rigorous sense of history.³

¹ *Ibid.* p. 13. Also see, Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1999), pp. 70-78, especially his analysis of the meaning of the terms *āyah*, *bayyina*, *burhān* and *ṣulṭān*.

² Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, pp. 13-15.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 16-17.

Certainly, Bennabi's search for a logical principle upon which to establish his inquiry on the religious phenomenon was equally based on both the Qur'anic text and the Cartesian curiosity. He demonstrated both a deep understanding of the religious text and a mastery of the Cartesian method of analysis. Utilizing the Cartesian principle of clarity and distinctness helped Bennabi to argue for his case *i'jāz* when both lexical and technical meanings of *i'jāz* were outdated by the new circumstances. It could be argued that he succeeded to clearly show the need to step beyond the Cartesian method in the study of the religious phenomenon from an historical perspective.

Textual Strategies, Meta-narrative and Modernity

Bennabi followed a strict textual strategy that is primarily based on a Cartesian mode of organizing his book. The principle of clarity and distinctiveness was crucial for both the organization of the chapters of the book and its line of argumentation. Accordingly, the book was divided into three main parts. While part one focuses on general philosophical and methodological issues, parts two and three were concerned with the Messenger (or, to Bennabi's terminology, Muhammad's self) and the Message (the Qur'an) respectively. The design behind this arrangement was to establish a system that would essentially be based on a set of principles constituting its main postulates. Following the Cartesian method of analysis, Bennabi started with the claim that man is a religious being or a *homo religiosus*.¹ This led him to view Positivism as a competing system that is categorically based on the rejection of metaphysics.

Therefore, a choice had to be made of a metaphysical rather than materialistic postulate, both of which were actually embedded in the Cartesian framework. For Bennabi, this choice was much less meant to discredit materialism than to point to the fact that the religious phenomenon could not be possibly explained meaningfully by materialism. This was because the type of rationalism embedded in it could not go beyond itself to give an

¹ *Ibid.* p. 30

account of that which is essentially not materialistic in nature. This limitation, however, was primarily put on it as an implication of its choice of the major postulate.

Thus, it seemed, the only viable choice for Bennabi to study the Prophetic movement was to subscribe to a metaphysical outlook. From the Biblical Prophets, Jeremiah furnished Bennabi with all the characteristics of prophethood upon which a comparison with Prophet Muhammad would be both meaningful and convenient. In doing so, Bennabi situated Prophet Muhammad within the Prophetic movement and his message within the history of Revelation. Thus, the logical sequence of both the chapters of the book and the line of argument followed the Cartesian principle of clarity and distinctiveness as a matter of both methodological and historical choice. Admittedly, the choice between “the physical system” and “the metaphysical system” was determined by the nature of the religious phenomenon itself. It seemed that the choice of Prophet Jeremiah was likely determined by the nature of comparison. Both Bennabi’s methodic and historical choices followed a logical sequence that is highly likely to be in line with the Cartesian mode of analysis. However, the culmination of his comparative style reached its climax in the comparative treatment of the story of Joseph. Apparently, the choice of the story of Joseph was guided by the Cartesian principle mentioned above. It could be argued that the textual strategy followed by Bennabi reflected both a deep understanding of the Cartesian system in particular and the challenges posed by modernity to the religious phenomenon in general.

His textual strategy culminated in the comparison of the story of Joseph in its Biblical and the Qur’anic versions. As already indicated, this generated a narrative that is based upon an end-to-end structure of the story. The originality of Bennabi, it should be noted, was less in choosing the story of Joseph than in reconstructing the story in a comparative table. Likewise, the narrative was utilized to reconstruct a structure of events within a comparative apparatus that made the meta-narrative possible. In this regard, the meta-narrative dealt with the set of possibilities that were open by Bennabi’s narrative of the two versions in a

comparative mode. Evidently, the main question of the meta-narrative was the following: How did the story of Joseph find its way in the Qur'an.

It should be remembered that Bennabi's analysis of the story of Joseph led him to formulate two different hypotheses in order to explain the similarities between the two versions. The first hypothesis focused on an unconscious assimilation of the Biblical narrative and subsequent reproduction thereof in the Qur'anic account. The second hypothesis did not shy away from directly accusing the Prophet of educating himself in the Biblical tradition and then composing the Qur'anic narrative on the issue. Bennabi stated that to solve this problem one needed to examine these hypotheses "from both psychological and historical viewpoints."¹ In doing so, he reminded us to utilize his analysis concerning Muhammad's self and its conclusion in part two of his study.²

In his examination of the first hypothesis, he concluded that, Nothing, therefore, is more improbable than the existence of monotheistic influence in the [pre-Islamic *Jahili* Arabic] culture, due to the lack of written Judeo-Christian sources.³

With regard to the second hypothesis, he suggested that, [I]t could have two psychological meanings: 1. Muhammad could have taught himself systemically in order to consciously compile the Qur'an. 2. He could have inquired about the information or could have been taught it and could have unconsciously used the materials thus at his disposal.⁴

These two passages underscore the fact that Bennabi fully utilized the Cartesian mode of analysis in his meta-narrative of the comparison. Similarly to his examination of the first hypothesis, he skillfully used the conclusions of historical research done in this area to eliminate the possibility of such claims carried by this hypothesis. Thus, he strongly asserted,

¹ *Ibid.* p. 221

² *Ibid.* pp. 221-222.

³ *Ibid.* p. 224

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 225

Hence, we are compelled to conclude that the established similarities are attributed neither to a Judeo-Christian influence spread in the *Jabili* milieu, nor to a personal, conscious or unconscious training of Muhammad.¹

After a thorough analysis of the different possibilities that might explain the similarities between the Biblical and the Qur'anic versions of the story of Joseph, Bennabi looked into the story of Moses and the Pharaoh in the light of archeological discoveries. Then, he extended his comparison to both the issue of the Flood and the crucifixion of Jesus. In all this, Bennabi succeeded to demonstrate that the possibilities of the two hypotheses under investigation are highly unlikely to be tenable. By this process of eliminating all historical possibilities that would serve to explain the similarities, Bennabi then reasserted the religious account of these events according to the understanding of the phenomenon of Revelation, showing to be a highly probable mode of explanation. In a rather cynical tone, he commented,

Considering the manifest differences between the Qur'an and the Bible on numerous points concerning the chronology of monotheism, it should be admitted, however, that the Qur'an would have been inspired by one or many Biblical versions which no longer exist. And finally, it would be necessary to admit that the Prophet must have worked very hard, like an erudite scholar, examining a number of documents, mediating on them and coordinating them, in order to extract from them the Qur'anic verses.²

According to Bennabi's analysis, a fair-minded person cannot accept any of these solutions. Accordingly, it seemed the only possible alternative would be the one that is anchored in the tradition of the Prophetic movement and the history of revelation.

Consequently, Bennabi's mastery of the Cartesian mode of analysis led him to counter-argue the position of modernity. The irony in what he achieved is that modernists used the Cartesian method to undermine religious claims, whereas Bennabi utilized

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 226 - 227

² *Ibid.* p. 230.

the same method to show how irrational the modernists' position concerning the explanation of the religious phenomenon is. This underscores the fact that the type of rationality embedded in the Cartesian method should not be the monopoly of the modernists. It may even be turned against them, if it is utilized objectively. Thus, Bennabi reclaimed the Cartesian method as a means of producing a favourable epistemology that looks into religion in a totally different and positive light. It is an epistemology that would never exclude religion but rather could be carefully applied to open space for a more learned and objective discourse on religion.

Conclusion

As seen above, Bennabi's comparison and analysis of the Biblical and Qur'anic accounts of the story of Joseph was mainly concerned with textual strategy, narrative and meta-narrative. It was less focused on inter-textual relationship between the Bible and the Qur'an, and concerned itself mainly with providing an explanation of the striking similarities. It should be reiterated that his choice to reconstruct the story of Joseph in order to answer the main question as to purpose of meta-narrative, i.e. of how the story was retold in the Qur'anic account, opened a new type of discourse in the understanding of the relationship between religion and modernity.

It should be equally highlighted that Bennabi's analysis of the religious phenomenon did not turn religion into an exclusive dogma. Rather it presented religious postulates emanating from monotheism as a learned choice of mapping the human reality. The Positivistic approach would be one possible way of understanding the religious phenomenon, but, according to Bennabi, it is highly unlikely. This is because it suffers from inherent problems, when applied to religious issues. Thus, in understanding the religious phenomenon as such, a learned choice had to be made between two competing methodological and

philosophical stands. Notably, both seem to have emerged from the Cartesian mode of analysis.¹

Clearly, the story of Joseph was an outcome of a learned textual strategy, and is in fact a twofold story of one end-to-end narrative of prophethood and human emotions: the story of Jacob, a loving father watching through difficult years of famine and uncertainty the realization of his son's dream with all hopes in God's promise in whose power he had full trust; and the story of Joseph, who, when his adopted mother and father, the aristocratic ladies in the city and those in power were arrayed against him, managed to be victorious over all by perseverance, resolute will and firm belief in God's promise.

Finally, he came to the moment of declaring the realization of his dream that turned a beginning-to-end narrative into an end-to-end one in the Qur'anic account, where it seems fairly certain that the Biblical narrative presents it as a beginning-to-end narrative. In the story of Jacob's family, this developed to encompass Joseph's story and beyond. In sum, Bennabi's comparative apparatus transformed the basic structure of the story of Joseph into an end-to-end narrative. Therefore, the comparison became possible because of this learned decision of uncovering the significance of the striking similarities. One can argue that Bennabi's originality is less in merely using the Cartesian method than in perceiving its importance in challenging modernity itself by its own means.

¹ Bennabi has critically addressed the tendency to strip reality and existence from their depth and richness by submitting our understanding thereof to the Cartesian mode of rationality and, for that matter, to instrumental reason. See for example his *Fikrat al-Afriqīyyah al-Āsiawīyyah*. Trans. by Abdel-Sabur Shahin (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1402/1982), pp. 195-196.

CHAPTER 4

Coherence in The Qur'an: Principles and Applications

Israr Ahmad Khan

Introduction

The major objective of Qur'an interpretation or exegesis (*tafsīr*) is to elaborate the true meanings and elucidate the message of God's Book. There is no *mufasssīr* (exegete) who does not claim that his attempt to interpret the Qur'anic statements is nothing but an endeavour to reach the true import of the divine words. Generally, the *mufasssīrīn* have used two kinds of tools to interpret the Qur'an, internal and external. The first includes Qur'anic verses, and Qur'anic language, and the second includes, in most cases, Prophetic traditions (Ḥadīth), history, Judeo-Christian sources, and pre-Islamic Arabic literature. But the application of these tools has been made by most of the commentators only to interpret the verses making least effort to explain each *sūrah* as an integral whole. Sharp and at times conflicting interpretations by scholars in deriving the message of the Qur'an, even they may have applied the same methodology, indicate that there might be something missing in their use of the internal or external tools.

External tools can be adapted to suit the situation. Internal tools, however, are unalterable. The Qur'anic diction, its styles of communication, its messages, its approaches and its *naẓm* (coherence) constitute the internal elements of the Qur'an. *Tafsīr* works in general have paid attention to the style, message and approach, in God's Book, but marginalized the element of coherence. The interpretation of the Qur'an could be likened to the work of an architect. If an architect dedicates his time and

energy to the beautification of the external form of his project but is not seriously concerned about the necessary principles for the construction of the inner structure, the building will be defective, despite its outward beauty. Likewise, a *mufasss* cannot afford to exclude even one single element of the internal dimension of the Qur'an from his purview.

Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904-1997) is of the view that many of the juristic controversies and theological disputes within The Muslim *ummah* have arisen due to the scholars' negligence of the contextual flow and coherence in the Qur'anic verses in interpreting the Qur'anic verses.¹ He believes that by applying the principle of coherence in the Qur'an interpretation, controversies over the meaning of God's words can be avoided.²

Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606 H) was the first to make a serious attempt to understand the Qur'anic verses in the light of the principle of coherence in his imposing *tafsir* work *Maṣāṭih al-Ghayb*. However, his application of the coherence principle did not go beyond a few *sūrah*s where he tried to develop a coherent understanding of The message of the Qur'an by linking seemingly different verses and passages in a *sūrah* to one another.

There are only two complete commentaries on the Qur'an that are based on the principle of coherence. The first is by Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm ibn 'Umar Burhān al-Dīn al-al-Biqā'ī (d. 885 H) and the second by Amin Ahsan Islahi. Many scholars viewed the identification of coherence in Qur'anic verses as knowledge of great value. They include, among others, Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh al-Naysābūrī (d. 324 H), Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī (d. 794 H), Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Zubayr al-Gharnāṭī (d. 708 H), Abū Ḥayyān Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Andalusī (d. 745 H), 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Kamāl Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 H), al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ishbīlī, known as Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 543 H), Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Harālī (d. 637 H), Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn

¹ Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an* (Delhi: Taj Company, 1997), vol. 1 p. 22.

² *Ibid.*

Sulaymān ibn al-Naḳīb al-Maḳdisī (d. 698 H), Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Malawī (d. 774 H), Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966 CE), Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi (d. 1979 CE), Muhammad Asad (d. 1992 CE), and Abdul-Hameed al-Farahi (d. 1930 CE).

Unfortunately, very few of them applied the *naẓm* theory in their works. Those who did try to discover the aspects of coherence among and between the verses did not go beyond selected few passages. Unless the Qur'an is interpreted in the light of the *naẓm* theory, the differences among scholars over the meaning of the Qur'anic verses will continue. This article is a humble attempt to reemphasize the significance of the concept of coherence in the interpretation of the Qur'an. It identifies the principles of "coherence" and applies them in order to determine the relationship between a verse and those preceding and succeeding it as well as among the other verses in the *sūrah*.

Principles of Coherence

To understand the various components of something in isolation is relatively easy, but to know the significance of all of them and weaving them into an integral whole is very difficult.¹ Likewise, an analysis of each and every single word in the Qur'anic verses is easy, but the identification of the coherence between verses needs a rigorous and systematic study. It is certain that there is a system of coherence in the entire Qur'an and that each and every single *sūrah*, large or small, constitutes an integral unit of the Qur'an. The entire universe, which comprises countless creatures, forces and phenomena, is based on coherence. Similarly, the Book of God Almighty consists of perfect cohesion in its words, sentences, passages and statements; no matter how diverse and different these components might outwardly appear. Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Maghribī (d. 865 H) explains the method to establish a link among the verses of the *sūrah* as follows:

In order to understand the coherence among and between the verses of the entire Qur'an you should identify, first of all, the

¹ Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 1, pp. 22-24.

objective (*gharaḍ*) for which the *sūrah* concerned stands, find out the premises (*muqaddimāt*) leading to the objective, trace the various levels of these premises in terms of their proximity to and remoteness from the objective, and take note of the implied rulings and subsequent arguments satisfying the listener's mind.¹

Al-Maghribī seems to be referring to two basic ways to find out the relationship among the verses of the *sūrah*: 1. Determination of the main objective of the *sūrah*, and 2. Identification of the verses forming a series of premises to discover the link between the objective and the premises.

Al-Farahi believes that the Qur'anic *sūrahs*, like a general coherent speech, are composed of four components: 1- the central theme (*'amūd*); 2- the preface (*tamhīd*); 3- the contextual flow (*manhaj*), and 4- the conclusion (*khātimah*).² According to this thesis, one has to develop, first of all, an understanding of the central theme of a *sūrah* around which all the passages of the *sūrah* revolve. Then, one has to study the *sūrah* from beginning to end in order to determine the fundamental thread connecting its verses. This includes to identify the addressee(s) throughout the *sūrah*, whether the Prophet (may peace be upon him), his sincere followers, the hypocrites, the non-believers in general, people in a state of indecision, or the people of previous scriptures, particularly the Jews. He proposes that every *sūrah* has certain specific features (*ma'ālīm al-sūwar*). Reflection on these features may lead to the identification of the central theme of the *sūrah*.³

In their interpretation of the *sūrah* al-Biqā'ī and Islahi would first start by identifying its central theme. Both of them would then proceed with the process of interpretation of the verses by referring to the context, the socio-historical background of a passage and, wherever necessary, to certain words in a verse

¹ Cited by Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm ibn 'Umar Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar fī Tanāsuh al-Āyāt wa al-Sūwar* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1995), vol. 1, p. 11.

² Abdul Ḥameed al-Farahi, *Rasā'il al-Imām al-Farāhī fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Sarai Mir: al-Dā'irah al-Ḥamādiyyah, 1991), pp. 84-86.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 92-94.

with a view to establishing the link among various statements of the *sūrah*.

Al-Farahi applied a well-known general principle of *tafsīr* according to which the Qur'an interprets the Qur'an (*al-Qur'ān yufassir al-Qur'ān*), not only to explain the meaning enshrined in a verse but also to analyze the link between the verse under consideration and other verses in a *sūrah*.¹ A summary of all the messages of a *sūrah* may also, as al-Farahi emphasized, help find links among all the components of the *sūrah*. For example, *sūrah al-Baqarah* may be summarized, in terms of its messages, as a *sūrah* dealing with the issues of the Qur'an, *tanẓīd*, appointment of the Prophet, Islam, prayer, *jihād*, *ḥajj*, *ḥarām* and *ḥalāl* (the prohibited and permissible), penal code, the issue of orphans, prohibition of marriage between a believer and a *mushrik* (polytheist), purity, repentance, divorce, charity, *ribā* (usury), loan, mortgage, witnessing, prayer for making the things easy, forgiveness, and victory.²

It seems that al-Maghribī's suggestion to look for the various topics dealt with in the *sūrah* is what al-Farahi refers to as "summary" of its different messages. Thus, from al-Maghribī's and al-Farahi's suggestions as well as the practical examples given by al-al-Biqā'ī and Islahī, it is possible to infer the main principles to establish the link among the verses of the *sūrah*. These principles are: 1- determination of the central theme of the *sūrah*; 2- summary of the various topics dealt with in the *sūrah*; 3- identification of the addressees to know the context; 4- deliberation over certain words in a verse and certain words or the verses preceding or succeeding it; 5- recognition of the socio-historical background of a verse or number of verses or a passage; 6- selection of the landmark theses in the *sūrah*; and 7- application of the general *tafsīr* principle mentioned above, i.e., *al-Qur'ān yufassir al-Qur'ān*.

The first three of the above mentioned seven principles are fundamental, while the remaining four may be considered as secondary and supplementary means to reach the goal. To develop an understanding of the central theme of a *sūrah* is not an easy task,

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 118-121.

² *Ibid.* p. 111.

particularly in the case of long *sūrah*s such as *al-Baqarah*, *Āl 'Imrān*, *al-Nisā'*, *al-Mā'idah*, and *al-An'ām*. It requires an in-depth analysis (*tadabbur*) of the Qur'anic words and passages. Al-Farahi believes that the determination of the central theme of a *sūrah* is a key to the identification of the coherence in the verses. Determining the central theme, however, requires a thorough research in and a deep understanding of the various themes not only of the *sūrah* being studied, but also of those *sūrah*s which precede and succeed it, as well as any other *sūrah*s which appear to be similar to it in terms of general premises.¹ Al-Farahi proffers the following advice to whoever is interested in knowing the relationship among apparently disconnected verses:

If you find a set of verses incoherent, despite much deliberation over it, you may overcome the problem by looking at the background and situation for which the verses were revealed; awareness of the background will lead you to the awareness of the coherence among the verses.²

Identification of landmark theses of a *sūrah* may also, at times, help derive its central theme.³ To maintain the contextual flow in all the passages and statements of the *sūrah*, the *mufasssir* has to use the Arabic principles of *ījāz* (condensation and brevity) and *ḥadhf* (omission), the most fundamental features of classical Arabic poetry and sermons. The socio-historical background of the revelation of a *sūrah* or any of its passages may also help maintain its contextual flow.

Application of the Principles of “Coherence”

The principles outlined above, when applied, reveal the coherence in the whole Qur'an. In the following pages, five *sūrah*s (*al-Mujādalah*, *al-Ḥashr*, *al-Mumtaḥanah*, *al-Jumu'ah* and *al-Munāfiqūn*) have been chosen to be interpreted with the help of these principles.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 89.

² *Ibid.* p. 99.

³ *Ibid.* p. 93.

Al-Mujādalah (The Pleading)

This is the fifty-eighth *sūrah* of the Qur'an and is comprised of twenty-two verses. It was reportedly revealed towards the end of the 5th year after the Hijrah.¹ Apparently, the *sūrah* deals with seven different issues. The first four verses (1-4) deal with the issue of *ḡibār*,² a kind of divorce in pre-Islamic Arab tradition, and its expiation. The second part comprises only two verses (5-6), referring to the punishment of those who adopt rebellious attitude towards God (*SWT*) and the Prophet (*SAŠ*).

The third part (verses 7-10) discusses the advantages and disadvantages of secret conversations. Verse 11 deals with the proper etiquettes to be observed in a gathering. Verses 12 and 13 are about the conditions of having a secret conversation with the Prophet (peace may be upon him). Verses 14 to 21 refer to and condemn the hypocrites' behaviour in an Islamic environment.³ The last verse of the *sūrah*, verse 23, stresses the fact that sincere Muslims belong to the "party of God" (*ḥiẓb Allāh*), and that they maintain no link whatsoever with the enemies of Islam.

Sūrah al-Mujādalah, therefore, apparently consists of seven parts dealing with seven different subjects. This raises the question:

¹ Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Tafhim al-Qur'an* (Lahore: Idāra Tarjuman al-Qur'an, 1997), vol.5, p. 336.

² The pre-Islamic Arabian custom called *ḡibār* was a custom whereby a husband could divorce his wife by simply declaring, "You are [henceforth as unlawful] to me as my mother's back", the term *ḡibār* ('back') being in this case a metonym for 'body'. In pagan Arab society, this mode of divorce was considered final and irrevocable, and a woman thus divorced was not only not permitted to remarry, but also had to remain forever in her former husband's custody. This cruel pagan custom had been abolished by the time of the revelation of the first four verses of *sūrah al-Mujādalah*. This abolition was further emphasized by the revelation of verse 4 of *sūrah al-Aḥzāb* (33), which reads: "Never has God endowed any man with two hearts in one body: and [just as] He has never made your wives whom you may have declared to be "as unlawful to you as your mothers' bodies" [truly] your mothers, so, too, has He never made your adopted sons [truly] your sons: these are but [figures of] speech uttered by your mouths - whereas God speaks the [absolute] truth: and it is He alone who can show [you] the right path." Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dār al-Andalus, 1984), p. 639, note 3. For more details on this issue, see Muhammad al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, *Tafsir al-Taḥrīr wa'l-Tamwīl* (Tunis: Dār Souhnoun, 1997), Vol. 13/28, pp. 5-22. – Editor.

³ Al-Farahi, *Rasā'il*, 109.

how can one then link these different issues to each other so that the entire *sūra* forms an integral whole?

The first thing to be done in this regard is to understand the central theme of the *sūrah*. According to al-Farahi, exposing Jews and their associates, while cautioning sincere believers about their own attitudes and habits and heralding the ultimate victory of Muslims would be considered to be the central theme of this *sūrah*.¹ For al-Biqā'ī, the main objective and central theme of the *sūrah* can be defined as announcement of the severe punishment awaiting those who defy God and His Messenger.² In Islahi's view, harsh condemnation of hypocrites for their hostile activities and advice to Muslims to guard against enemies form the main theme of this *sūrah*.³

The three scholars, thus, concur on the central theme of the *surah*. Strangely, none of them used the two terms *ḥizb Allāh* (the party of God) and *ḥizb al-shayṭān* (the party of the devil) in their discussion on the main theme of the *sūra*. The term *ḥizb Allāh* occurs twice in the Qur'an, in *sūrah al-Mujādalah* (58: 22) and *sūrah al-Mā'idah* (5: 56). The term *ḥizb al-shayṭān* occurs only in *sūrah al-Mujādalah*. It seems advisable, therefore, to consider a theme that reflects the special terms used by the *sūra*. As al-Farahi suggests, the mentioning of *ḥizb Allāh* and *ḥizb al-shayṭān* may be two landmark premises of the *sūra*. It may, then, be said that the main issue of the *sūra* is that the people around the Prophet are divided into two categories: the party of God and the party of evil forces (*ḥizb al-shayṭān*); the former, destined to attain success and bliss (*ḥalāl*), always look towards God and the Prophet for guidance; and the latter, bound to failure and leading a severely painful life (*ḥusran*), always defy God's commands and the Prophet's teachings and are conniving to hurt Islam and Muslims. Keeping this central theme in view one can trace the link between the different parts of the *sūrah*.

¹ *Ibid.* 109.

² Al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*, vol. 7, p. 47.

³ Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 8, p. 243.

The first part (verses 1-4) concerns a woman, Khawlah bt. Tha'labah, who was separated from her husband, Aws ibn Šāmit, through an age-old Arab way of divorce known as *ẓihār*. She talked to the Prophet over the matter evidently to seek guidance from him. In response, God revealed the law pertaining to *ẓihār*.¹ Apparently, the first verse is not related to the succeeding three verses. The link between them is established in the light of socio-historical background.

The second part (verses 5-6), refers to those who chose to defy God's command about *ẓihār*. The link between the first and second parts is evident thanks to occurrence of similar vocabulary at the end of both verses 4 and 5. Verse 4 ends with a statement: "and grievous suffering [in the life to come] awaits all who deny the truth (*kāfirūn*)", while verse 5 ends with the statement: "And [so] for those who deny the truth (*kāfirūn*) there will be shameful suffering in store." The similarity between these two statements indicates that verses 5 and 6 concern the same people referred to in the last part of verse 4. The term *kāfirūn* has not been used in these two verses in its generic sense; it rather signifies the hypocrites who were known for their defiance of any new regulation particularly against age-old Arab traditions. With the revelation of a new law condemning and prohibiting *ẓihār*, the hypocrites were expected to reject and challenge it. It may not be correct to say that the word *kāfirūn* as used here refers to all the non-believers because the Islamic provision on *ẓihār* is applicable only to Muslims and not to non-Muslims. The hypocrites, being part of Islamic society, are also subject of the revealed law, but they have been referred to as *kāfirūn* owing to their rejection of the Truth.

Here, the principle of the interpretation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an may also be applied. The Qur'anic statement in *sūrah al-Tawbah* (74): "yet most certainly have they uttered a saying which amounts to a denial of the truth (*kufr*) after [having professed] their self-surrender to God (*islām*)", speaks about hypocrites and refers to their approach as *kufr*. Hence, the word *kāfirūn* in *sūrah al-*

¹ Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'il Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2000), vol. 4, pp. 310-311.

Mujādalah refers to the hypocrites. In the third part of the same *sūrah*, verses 7-10, the conspiracy of those “defiant” as mentioned in the previous verses through secret counsels has been mentioned and Muslims have been advised to refrain from such meetings convened to harm Islamic movement. In the fourth part, verse 11, participants in the gatherings with the Prophet have been advised not to sit close to one another in order to prevent them from indulging in secret counsel against the Prophet. The fifth part, verses 12-13, seeks to put restraint on the hidden enemies, i.e., the hypocrites (*munaḥḥiqūn*), who wanted to have private discussion with the Prophet even on simple matters only to disturb him mentally and psychologically. In summary, verses 5-13 deal with the hypocrites’ attitude towards Islam, while verses 4-21 also deal with the hypocrites who have been termed as the members of the party of evildoers. This we know through the socio-historical background information on the revelation of these verses, according to which the hypocrites used to conspire against the Prophet in collusion with the Jews.¹

The last verse of *al-Mujādalah* talks about the attitude that sincere Muslims, the party of God, are required to adopt toward the enemies of Islam. It has been emphasized in the end that God always helps those sincere to Him as He helped Khawlah bt. Tha‘labah by giving a permanent solution to an apparently difficult problem. The approach of the woman who complained of her husband to the Prophet (referred to in the very first verse of the *sūrah*) represents the party of God. A phrase in the last verse, “whom [in time] He strengthened with inspiration (*ruh*) from Himself”, if interpreted in the light of the seventh principle of coherence, completes the connection between the opening statement of the *sūrah* and the last one. The word *ruh* has been used in four senses: (i) soul, (as in 15:29; 21:91; 32:9; 38:72), (ii) the Qur’an (42:52), (iii) revelation or inspiration (*wahy*) (16:2; 17:85; 40:15) and (iv) the Archangel Gabriel (2:87; 2:253; 5:110; 16:102; 26:193; 70:4; 78:38; 97:4). In the above mentioned statement, the word *ruh* seems to have been used in the sense of the Qur’an, *wahy*

¹ Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur’ān*, vol. 8, p. 259.

and Gabriel. Thus, the meaning of the phrase will be: "God helped them by sending the Qur'an, the *wahy*, through the angel Gabriel."

Likewise, the first part of the *sūrah* stands as an example of God's assistance to His sincere servants through *wahy*. The *sūrah* stresses that people have two different attitudes while dealing with the Prophet concerning their problems. One attitude is appreciable and rewarding whereas the other one is condemnable. Those with appreciable approach form the party of God and those with condemnable attitude constitute the party of the devil.

Thus, *sūrah al-Mujādalah* deals with certain characteristics of two groups of people in the Madīnan Islamic society: those loyal and sincere to the Prophet (*SAS*) and those who are apparently Muslims but insincere to the Prophet and conniving to sabotage his mission.

Al-Ḥashr (The Gathering)

This is the fifty-ninth *sūrah*. It consists of 24 verses and was reportedly revealed in the 4th year after the Hijrah.¹ According to al-Biqā'ī, its central theme is that God is all-Powerful and all-Wise, victory is for God and His Messengers as He thwarted the combined conspiracy of the Jews and the hypocrites against the Prophet and his mission.² Al-Farahi identified its main theme as being a condemnation of the Jews and their associates and a warning to Muslims to be wary of what the hypocrites do.³ In Islahi's understanding, the hypocrites were warned in the *sūrah al-Mujādalah* of the severe consequences of their hostility toward Islam in the form of their total defeat and in *sūrah al-Ḥashr* an historical example of that warning and defeat has been presented to show to the hypocrites how powerful God is in His plan and action.⁴

This central theme seems to have been derived based on a study of the socio-historical background of the *sūrah* and by summing up all the premises running throughout the *sūrah*. The

¹ Mawdudi, *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 5, p. 370.

² Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, vol. 7, p. 509.

³ Al-Farahi, *Rasā'il*, p. 109.

⁴ Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān*, vol. 8, p. 279.

whole *sūrah* is therefore addressed to the hypocrites in Madīnan society directly and to the entire Muslim community indirectly.

The *sūrah* may be seen to comprise of eight sections dealing with eight different matters. The first section, consisting solely of the first verse, emphasizes that the God is almighty and truly wise, and end with phrase “*He alone is almighty, truly wise*”; this enables us to establish the link with the second section. The *sūrah* begins with reference to God’s limitless power, and the second section (verses 2-4) describes a concrete manifestation of that power in the form of defeat for the Jews in their conspiracy against the Prophet. The last statement in verse 4 (*verily, God is severe in retribution*) links the second part with the third part consisting of only one verse (5) which mentions that Jews were disgraced by Muslims’ destroying their estate, and all this comes to light when one looks at the socio-historical backdrop of the incident.

Section 4, verses 6-10, revolves around the provisions governing the distribution of the Jews’ spoils between the Prophet and his sincere and deserving followers. This is also a kind of disgrace and punishment for the Jews. Section 5, verses 11-17, explains that the hypocrites do not deserve at all to get any share in the booty because of their proved nexus with the Jews, and that they will share the hell-fire with the Jews in the Hereafter. In part 6 of the *sūrah* (verses 18-20) Muslims have been cautioned to be careful about their doings lest the hypocrites’ approach should influence them.

Section 7, consisting of only one verse (21), speaks metaphorically of the position of the Qur’an as the word of God. The last section, verses 22-24, describes certain essential attributes of God. By so doing, it invite those members of the Islamic society with disease in their hearts to cure their ailment of hypocrisy, duplicity and insincerity by seriously pondering over the various attributes of God, the Almighty, all-Wise.

Al-Mumtaḥanah (The Examined One)

This is the sixtieth *sūrah*. It comprises thirteen verses revealed be-

fore the victory of Makkah.¹ Its central theme, as al-Biqā'ī put it, is the seclusion of the believers from the non-believers who identified themselves as a separate entity different from believers by denying the truth.² Islahi maintained that Muslims in Madīnah, particularly the emigrants from Makkah, are advised in this *sūrah* to sever their relationship with the non-believers of Makkah and submit themselves totally to God and His Messenger as Ibrāhīm and his companions did.³ The whole *sūrah* addresses the emigrant Muslims in Madīnah directly and the entire Muslim society indirectly.

This *sūrah* comprises six sections. The first three verses (1-3) exhort emigrant Muslims to sever their relationship with the enemies of Islam. The implication of this message could be fully appreciated in the light of the socio-historical background of this revelation, according to which an emigrant Muslim, Ḥāṭib ibn Abī Balta'ah, tried to inform the people in Makkah about the Prophet's plan of an imminent military expedition to Makkah in the near future and thereby to win the sympathy of the Makkans toward the safety of his family members who were still in Makkah.⁴ The second part, verses 4-7, advises Ḥāṭib and others to adopt the same approach towards God's cause in the same manner that Ibrāhīm and his followers had.

The third section, verses 8-9, advises Muslims to differentiate between two categories of disbelievers: those who fight Muslims and Islam and those who do not. The latter category of disbelievers is to be treated justly and kindly in contrast to the former. The fourth section, verses 10-11, contains the prescription on the marital relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim spouses. Keeping the central theme in view, one can see the connection between this section and those sections preceding and succeeding it. Section four thus reemphasizes that non-believers do not deserve to continue their conjugal ties with Muslim partners, hence total socio-cultural boycott of the enemies.

¹ Mawdudi, *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 5, p. 420.

² Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, vol. 7, p. 547.

³ Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān*, vol. 8, p. 319.

⁴ Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āyī al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1997), vol. 12, p. 56.

The fifth section, verse 12, advises the Prophet to accept the pledge of allegiance from refugee Muslim women as a means, perhaps, to ascertain their sincerity to Islam. The last section of the *sūrah*, verse 13, is a reassertion of the divine command to Muslims that they should befriend neither the non-believers nor the Jews. It suffices to say that the central theme of the *sūrah* is the identification of the relationship between the believers and non-believers.

Al-Jumu'ah (The Congregation)

This is the sixty-second *sūrah* of the Qur'an and is comprised of eleven verses. Verses 1-8 were reportedly revealed in the 7th year after the Hijra, and the remaining verses (9-11) were revealed at the beginning of the Madīnan period.¹ Apparently, the *sūrah* deals with four issues: 1. The announcement of God as the all-Powerful, all-Wise, all-Holy, with authority over the entire universe. 2. The raising of the last Prophet from among the Arabs and making his message universal (verses 1-4). 3. The apathetic attitude of the Jews towards their revealed scripture, the Torah, and their materialism and love for worldly life and comforts (verses 6-8). 4. The correction of a mistake by Muslims concerning Friday prayer (verses 9-11).

Understanding the central theme of the *sūrah* would help us discover the connecting thread among the four issues. Islahi says that the children of Ismā'īl (the Quraysh) have been warned that they should appreciate God's blessing in the form of the last Prophet's appointment from among them and that they should not fall victim to the tricks and conspiracies of the Jews lest they also stand deprived of this great blessing of God.² Thus, according to him, the main theme is that the Jews lost their privilege of being in the leading position of the religion owing to their lackadaisical attitude towards their Prophets, and God's message in the form of Torah, and this position was transferred to the Arabs of the *Jāhiliyyah* among whom the last Prophet was raised. Hence, the followers of Muhammad should not develop the same kind of indifference to the position and message of the Prophet (SAS).

¹ Mawdudi, *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, vol.5, p. 482.

² Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, vol. 8, p. 373.

The first verse gets linked to the succeeding section through its last words *al-Malik* (the Sovereign Supreme), *al-Quddūs* (the Holy), *al-‘Azīz* (the Almighty), *al-Ḥakīm* (the Wise). It also relates to the historical background according to which the Jews were very critical of the last Prophet being raised from among the unlettered non-scriptural people, the Arabs of the *Jāhiliyyah*.

So, it was said that raising a prophet was entirely the discretion of God (*al-Malik*, *al-‘Azīz*) and appointing the last Prophet from among the unlettered Arabs (*ummiyyūn*) and not from among the Jews was based not on any prejudice against the Jews (*al-Quddūs*). This was rather a manifestation of God’s perfect wisdom (*al-Ḥakīm*). The section ending with a statement: “*for God is limitless in His great bounty*”, sufficiently connects this part to the succeeding section (verses 5-8) in which several reasons have been given for depriving the Jews of the great bounty of God, i.e. the appointment of the last Prophet from other than them. The last section, verses 9-11, appears to have no link with the preceding ones. However, when considered in light of the central theme of the *sūrah*, it is easy to see the coherent relationship between them. This part of the *sūrah* highlights a mistake committed by some Muslims. It recalls an incident in which some people attending in the Friday prayer left the Prophet and the Muslims in the mosque to engage in trade activity outside. The purpose of this verse is to make them realize that their disregard to the time of a religious duty and indifferent attitude towards the Prophet were similar to those traits of the Jews which cost the latter their privileged status and position of leadership.

The last part of the *sūrah* advises Muslims not to adopt the same attitude towards the Prophet and his mission as the Jews had in their rejection of and disobedience to other prophets before Muhammad. Hence, Muslims should strike a balance between spiritual and material life and between wordly and religious duties. They were told that the Jews did not observe and respect the prescribed time for the religious duties of ritual worship and devoted all their time to wordly pursuits. The last statement of the third part – “*whereupon He will make you truly understand all that you were doing [in life]*” – refers to the link between this part and the

fourth part where Muslims were told that they did something wrong when they left the Prophet at the pulpit of the Mosque to get engaged in material transactions for which the time is only after the completion of prescribed religious duties.

By applying the *naẓm* theory to the *sūrah*, one comes across another significant message, i.e., that time is a valuable thing that must be utilized properly. In order to maintain contextual flow in all the premises, it is necessary to determine the addressees in the *sūrah*. In the verses 1-8, the Jews have been addressed and in the last part (verses 9-11), the direct addressees are Muslims. At the same time, the whole *sūrah* indirectly addresses the Quraysh.

Al-Munāfiqūn (The Hypocrites)

This is the sixty-third *sūrah* of the Qur'an. It comprises eleven verses, and was reportedly revealed in the 6th year after the Hijrah.¹ It consists of two parts dealing with two issues. The first part, consisting of the first eight verses, exposes the hypocrites' hidden agenda and contrives against the Prophet and his mission. The second part advises the Muslims to be forthcoming in assisting the Prophet and his followers both materially and morally. The first part refers to the vow of the hypocrites to withdraw their support from the Makkan Muslims; the second part commands the believers – particularly those of Madīnan origin – to refrain from falling victim to the treacherous schemes of the hypocrites.

As for the central theme of this *sūrah*, Islahi opined that it serves as a conclusion and endnote to the previous *sūrah*, al-Jumu'ah, where it continues with the description of the characteristic features of the hypocrites who wished to appear sincere in the eyes of the Prophet, while not complying with any of his commands.² Al-Biqā'ī maintained that its main objective consists of intense admonition against duplicity in words and deeds. It thus aims to lead the addressees to develop harmony in their faith and practice.³

¹ Mawdudi, *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, vol. 5, p. 508.

² Islahi, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an* vol. 8, p. 393.

³ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, vol. 7, p. 605.

In other words, the central theme is the condemnation of hypocrites' hostile attitude towards Islam and its faithful bearers, while also being as invitation to sincere Muslims, particularly the Anṣār, to counteract the hypocrites' plan to boycott the Prophet and the emigrant Muslims both socially and financially. This theme links all the components of the *sūrah*.

The contextual flow in the *sūrah* may be maintained by determining the direct addressees in its verses. In verses 1 to 8, the Prophet and his sincere followers are the direct addressees, while the insincere 'Muslims', well known for their duplicity and hypocrisy, are the indirect subjects of the *sūrah*. Verses 9-11 address the wealthy Muslims from the Anṣār directly and others, including the hypocrites indirectly.

Conclusion

There are several principles of "coherence" for use in interpreting the Qur'an. The most eminent of these principles are: 1. Central theme; 2. Premises; 3. Context; 4. Similarity of vocabulary in different verses; 5. Socio-historical background; 6. Special features; and 7. Interpretation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an.

The application of these principles enables us to perceive the *sūrah* as an integral whole and helps establish the link among its various components. It is, therefore, suggested that every verse of the Qur'an needs to be looked at from a holistic perspective of the *sūrah* in which it occurs, and that an attempt to derive the meaning of a verse in isolation of other verses should be avoided. The widely used methodology of *tafsīr* of the Qur'an, whether related to the internal means – Qur'anic language, and Qur'anic statements – or connected to external aids – *ahādīth*, the Companions' views, scholars' opinions, history, previous revealed scriptures, and classical *tafsīr* works – is undoubtedly of immense value, but it seems very strange that it has led scholars concerned with the study of the Qur'an, especially exegetes and jurists, to derive different meanings from the same Qur'anic verses. This lack of common understanding has led to differences of opinion and conflicting views over Islamic rulings on many issues.

As scholars like al-Farahi, al-Biqā'ī and Islahi suggest, the use of the

naẓm theory in *tafsir* may resolve many problems, especially those issues of theological and juridical nature. Islamic institutions of learning need to introduce this so far neglected methodology in their *tafsir* curricula. A thorough understanding of the Qur'anic message based on the principles of coherence is deemed necessary for the Muslim *ummah* to attain unity of ideas, unity of approach, and unity of practice alongside its unity of faith.

CHAPTER 5

Globalization and the Construction of Knowledge: Contemporary Scholarship and the Qur'anic Perspective

Mohd Hazim Shah

Introduction

Juxtaposing the Qur'an with Globalization, as suggested by the title of this chapter, might raise eyebrows for some, though for different reasons. To the Muslim, the eternity of the Qur'anic message should not be cast beside a temporal event such as globalization. To the secular humanist or modernist, religion does not earn or deserve the same cognitive space as science or modern knowledge as found in the so-called "Age of Globalization", and hence consider the pairing anachronistic. Whatever attitude one might have towards the juxtaposition of the 'Qur'an' and 'globalization', the more important task is to ask for the motivation behind the inquiry, the nature of such an inquiry, and what such a line of inquiry hopes to achieve. This amounts to presenting a statement of the problem as well as a statement of purpose.

Intuitively, one can say that the topic under discussion is motivated by a critical self-reflection towards the place and role of religion, in this case Islam, in contemporary society. For some, it might even be a reflection that would hopefully result in the reaffirmation of faith and belief. Muslim societies and culture can no longer insulate themselves from external influences in the 'globalized' world, and since knowledge is fundamental to any culture, influence at the level of knowledge would thus constitute the most basic challenge facing Islamic peoples.

Though the relevance of the Qur'an to the lives of contemporary Muslims has not been doubted, there is the

perceived need to fend off any possibility – real or imaginary – or suggestion that the ‘Age of Globalization’ has somewhat made redundant the Qur’anic perspective on knowledge, or that holding on to it is no longer intellectually respectable in view of contemporary developments in knowledge and society. Globalization has not only brought about standardization in work culture, technological artifacts and economic systems, but also in the forms of knowledge that accompanies it. Whereas previously the distinction between the functional and the symbolic or existential might be clear, the globalization of knowledge and the technological and economic systems which it supports, and which in turn supports it, all this has somewhat blurred that distinction, thus bringing into focus the question of the place, or even status, of religious knowledge in the contemporary world

There are two possible ways of approaching the issue; one normative and the other historical. The normative route would require us to provide an appraisal of the various competing epistemologies, and the strategy for the Muslim would be to provide an epistemological justification or ‘defense’ of the Qur’anic perspective vis-à-vis other epistemologies. This normative approach is also a-historical, and assumes a view of knowledge largely modeled on the natural sciences. It entails a view of epistemology as a type of science, indeed akin to the natural sciences, and has provoked a famous response in the form of naturalistic epistemology.

The other path involves an historical inquiry, and perhaps an anthropology of sorts. It does not start out by seeking to judge which epistemology is superior based on some rational or logical principles, but instead seeks to uncover the historical origins of the motivation underlying the inquiry. This approach is historical without being ‘historicist’.¹ It is not historicist because it does not regard truth as essentially subject to historical change unlike the historicist who privileges history by adopting an ‘evolutionary epistemology’. My own approach in this chapter involves a

¹ See Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961). I use the term ‘historicism’ to refer to both the belief that a study of history can reveal social laws, and the belief that truth is fundamentally historical in nature.

synthesis of the two, the bias being on the side of history. I will invoke history in order to ‘understand the question’; that is why the question is posed in the first place. Once it is understood where the question came from, the historical context within which it is framed, and what *sort of answers* one should expect for it, then it becomes appropriate to bring in the normative dimension in order to prevent the answers from assuming a degree of arbitrariness that might border on nihilism. So, even though eventually questions of truth, objectivity, and rationality—the staple or standard fare of Western epistemological inquiry—will feature in our assessment of knowledge including religious knowledge, enough distinctions would have been made in order to put them in their proper place. Some of those distinctions, conditions, and qualifications would be occasioned by our historical inquiry and not independent of it. Thus, what we mean by ‘legitimization of knowledge’ for instance, might not be strictly equivalent to the classical idea of ‘validation of knowledge’, which even from the outset has prejudged history as constitutive of the ‘genetic fallacy’.

Understanding Our Present Predicament through a Historical Stage Setting: The Historical Evolution of Knowledge

The fact that we need to reassure ourselves that Qur’anic knowledge and perspective are still relevant in this so-called ‘Age of Globalization’ is a sad reflection of the times. It not only symbolizes the powerlessness of the Muslim, but also his desperate desire to retain his faith and identity in a world that is increasingly slipping away from beneath his feet. I cannot imagine a similar seminar on “Qur’an and Knowledge Systems in the Contemporary World” being conducted in twelfth century Spain or Baghdad for instance. Being world leaders in the field of knowledge then, such power and confidence would not necessitate a critical self-reflection or a group therapeutic response to reassure the Muslims of their faith or their social and cultural condition.¹

¹ Even though parts of Spain had been re-conquered by the Christians then, and that the Muslims were involved in the Crusades against the Christians, Muslims were still a power to be reckoned with militarily as well as culturally and intellectually.

The fact of the matter was that Muslims had acquired Greek knowledge since about the eighth century, and continued to cultivate and develop it till about the 14th century. The Islamic civilization had produced great scientists, physicians, mathematicians, philosophers, and astronomers, such as Ibn al-Haytham (optics), al-Khawārizmī (mathematics), Ibn Sīnā (philosophy and medicine), Ibn al-Shāṭir (astronomy), al-Rāzī (chemistry), and Ibn Rushd (philosophy and medicine), men whose works were later to influence the course of development of knowledge in the Western world. Islam could not have been incidental to their success for they lived and thought as Muslims. Even though sociological historians of science such as Toby Huff¹ have tried to argue for the thesis of the institutional impediment of Islam to the growth of science, such a thesis would have difficulties in accounting for the growth of science in the Muslim world over a period of four centuries or so, taking a conservative estimate.

The revival of learning in the West that began in the 12th century through the translation efforts of scholars such as Gerard of Cremona, Michael Scot, Adelard of Bath and others, through Spain, could not have been possible without the repository of Greco-Muslim learning bequeathed to the Europeans. The rediscovery of Greek learning and its enrichment by Muslim scholars made possible the establishment of universities in Europe in the 13th century, by providing them with a corpus of knowledge that would form the mainstay of medieval learning. To say that the revival of learning in the West began with the Italian Renaissance of the 16th century, due to the direct recovery of Greek sources made possible through Christian monks after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, is historically inaccurate. The establishment of medieval universities in Europe *preceded* the Renaissance, and owed its source to the rediscovery of Greek learning through the Muslim world. Under such circumstances, I again reiterate that the relationship of the Qur'an to true

¹ See Toby E. Huff, *The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China and the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

knowledge and scholarship would not have been a socio-cultural problematic. True, some Muslim philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Rushd did articulate a ‘doctrine of double truth’. But it only showed the defensive line taken by secular learning, not by Islam. Foucault’s thesis about the relationship between knowledge and power seems to be nicely illustrated here. To some extent, power influences, if not determines, the status of knowledge or what is counted as knowledge.

Western epistemologists would like to think that their discourse on knowledge as justified, and that their research is conducted in the spirit and atmosphere of ‘the disinterested pursuit of truth’. But such ‘ground of knowledge’ is needed to maintain a secular society, which in turn supports such philosophical enterprise. Epistemology as a subject of inquiry, and later as an academic discipline, flourished in Europe beginning from the 17th century onwards with thinkers such as Descartes, Bacon, Hume, Locke, and Kant. They were enquiring about the foundations of knowledge not within some abstract Platonic realm, but with their feet very much steeped in the philosophico-cultural problems of the times.¹ They were responding to the challenges brought forth by scientific knowledge to Christian and medieval conceptions of knowledge. They also needed a new epistemology in order to delegitimize the old order, power structure and sources of authority, namely the Church.

Therefore, to think that their inquiries were conducted solely for the sake of the truth is quite naïve, to say the least. Kant, for instance, ventured on an epistemological project that had a clear objective in mind, i.e. to save rationality, science and the Enlightenment, and yet preserve Christian ethics. In his *The Critique of Pure Reason*, to be sure, he employed reason to its fullest extent in carrying out its inquiry, but it is not an aimless or directionless inquiry. Kant’s epistemological work was later to bear political fruits in that it helped in shaping Enlightenment thinking and the

¹ See in regard Paul Russell, “Skepticism and Natural Religion in Hume’s *Treatise*”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.49 (1988), pp. 247-265.

social and political institutions that followed. So, knowledge cannot really be divorced from power.

Thus entrenched, epistemology then becomes the arbitre of what is to count as 'knowledge'. It then becomes a foundational discipline that supposedly has the power and authority to sit in judgement over disputes involving cognitive claims. In the words of Richard Rorty:

Philosophy can be foundational in respect to the rest of culture because culture is the assemblage of claims to knowledge, and philosophy adjudicates such claims. It can do so because it understands the foundations of knowledge, and it finds these foundations in a study of man-as-knower.¹

Since the Industrial Revolution in Britain in the 18th century, the development of knowledge – especially scientific knowledge – has taken a new turn. If the successes of science in the 17th and 18th centuries have given the Enlightenment the moral courage to take a new view of man and knowledge, and to empower his mind and knowledge, developments since the Industrial Revolution have placed knowledge and the mind in a new context. Scientific knowledge has been applied to technology and has become a new source of economic growth. Big firms now typically have Research and Development (RD) divisions or departments as part of their attempt to apply scientific knowledge for technological innovation that would provide them with a competitive edge over their rivals. In this new context, the link between science, technology and the economy becomes stronger.

If the Enlightenment were still able to think of the human mind and scientific knowledge as mirroring the truth about nature, such a conception no longer becomes feasible in the age of high-tech science and industry. This thesis has been convincingly argued for instance by Jean Francois Lyotard in his book *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.² The so-called 'correspondence theory of truth' becomes less applicable to 'scientific truths',

¹ See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 3.

² See Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report On Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

especially when scientific research becomes mediated by technology and has to serve technological and economic criteria of practical success. It is not surprising, therefore, to see more pragmatic conceptions of truth and scientific knowledge emerging over the last few decades.

Knowledge and Colonialism: The Influence of Colonialism on Local Knowledge and Traditions

Although colonialism was partly responsible for the historical movement towards globalization, this was not achieved without a price, especially on local cultures and traditions. Studies by scholars such as Edward Said, and anthropologists such as Arjun Appadurai and Bernard Cohn, have shown how Western colonialists with their new-found conception of knowledge that was largely a product of the scientific revolution of the 17th century, and of 18th century Enlightenment, have imposed this knowledge on local societies and cultures through the institutions they created, and through their own administrative practices. In the case of India for instance, the services of local men of knowledge were employed in order to facilitate colonial administration and social control. Inevitably, this has the effect of subordinating local cultures and knowledge systems to that of the colonial West.¹

But is it valid to compare the experience of Western domination on Oriental cultures such as the Indian, Malay or Chinese cultures, with that of Western colonization over Muslim lands in general? Isn't the historical relationship between Islam and the West different from that between the Orient and the West? I think the comparison is valid due to certain similarities between the two cases. One significant effect of Western colonization is to create a sense of 'superiority' of Western knowledge over the local. This is partly achieved through the dominance of Western powers

¹ See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978); Arjun Appadurai, "Number in the Colonial Imagination", in Carol Breckenridge & Peter van der Veer (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 314-339; Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); David Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge", in Carol Breckenridge & Peter van der Veer, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-278.

over the colonized, in which the new knowledge was perceived to underlie that power.

Thus, it is not surprising to find Muslim intellectuals and reformists, especially in the 19th century, such as Muhammad Iqbal, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muhammad ‘Abduh, and Sayyid Ahmad Khan, rising to the fore to meet the intellectual and social challenges posed by the west, by posing their own Islamic perspective of knowledge, life and society – based on the Qur’an – to counter that of the West.¹ What these Muslim religious reformers tried to do was to demonstrate the relevance of Islam in the face of modernity brought about by the West. In so doing, they were effectively arguing for the Qur’anic perspective on knowledge and life, instead of being intimidated by images of Western superiority.

But the new confrontation between the ‘East’ and the ‘West’ during the period of Western imperialism of the 18th and 19th centuries is, strictly speaking, of a different order from, let us say, the Crusades of the 11th and 12th centuries. The West of the 18th and 19th centuries is a west that had shaken itself off from the yoke of medievalism and was on the march towards modernity. Insofar as the ‘new West’ is post-medieval in its characteristics, its antithetical stance is not only with respect to the Eastern ‘Other’, but also with respect to its previous historical ‘self’. In other words, colonialism, i.e. the ‘overcoming’ of the East by the West, can also be viewed as the *continuation and extension* of the West’s overcoming of itself. This ‘overcoming of itself’ in Western history can be seen through episodes such as the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, the conflict between Galileo and the Roman Catholic Church in the 17th century, the Thirty-Years War between the Catholics and Protestants, and the Enlightenment of the 18th century. In fact, some of the Muslim reformists mentioned earlier were quite aware of this ‘split in the Western personality’ brought about by its historical evolution, and were selective in their criticisms of the West. It was known, for example, that al-Afghānī

¹ See Nikki Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968).

was an admirer of Martin Luther¹ and sought to achieve something similar in the Muslim world (but not in the sense of creating a new sect), and that Iqbal was influenced by Nietzsche and that he accepted some elements of Darwin's theory of evolution.

However, the difference between Islam and the West is that, although religion in the form of Christianity has lost out to science and secularism in the West, in Islam such a transformation has not taken place and modernity is conducted within the old religious framework with perhaps a few exceptions. Thus, attempts are still being made in the Islamic world to accommodate modernity to Islam and vice versa. In the field of knowledge, an epistemological project, that of the "Islamization of Knowledge", was first associated with the late Prof. Ismail Faruqi who wrote a monograph on the Islamization of Knowledge.

Epistemology in the West: Postmodernism and Restoring a Religious Perspective on Knowledge?

As noted by some scholars, globalization is Janus-faced. While it has a homogenizing and singularizing tendency, it is also pluralistic. This general feature of globalization has its implications for epistemology too. In order to understand this aspect further, let us consider the various epistemological positions that have currently evolved in the West, and which can be regarded as 'mainstream'. These positions are: 1- the classical view that basically regards knowledge as justified true belief; 2- the "scientistic" position; 3- the postmodernist position (which includes phenomenology, existentialism and deconstructionism); 4- pragmatism, and 5- the social constructivist position.

To be sure, according to the way I have classified them, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive; for example, 1 might overlap with 2, while 3 might overlap with 5. In any case, I will discuss these various epistemological positions not so much with a view towards appraising and adjudicating between rival epistemological positions, as seeing their relevance to the contestation between

¹ Bassam Tibi, *The Crisis of Modern Islam: A Pre-Industrial Culture in the Scientific-Technological Age* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), p.136.

secular and religious – especially Islamic – perspectives on, and claims to, knowledge. My discussion will focus on 1, 2 and 3, as I believe they are more challenging to those espousing an Islamic perspective on knowledge, as compared to 4 and 5.

The notion of knowledge as justified, true belief has formed the mainstay of Western epistemological theories.¹ Debates have normally centered on the question of whether the three elements, i.e. belief, justification and truth, constitute a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge. As it stands, this set of conditions does not in itself run against any Islamic conception of knowledge. Surely, Islam too would accept belief and truth as conditions for knowledge. The only possible area of controversy lies in the condition of justification. What counts as justification? In Islam, there are two accepted forms of justification, namely that based on Reason (*'aqli*) and that based on Revelation (*naqli*).² The epistemic position of the Qur'an as revelation is something that has to be taken for granted, much in the same way as a scientific paradigm constrains scientific inquiry. However, in Islamic history *naqli* arguments have been deemed to constrain moral judgements, but in no way hindered inquiries into nature, nor did it witness the type of religion-science controversy known in Western history and involving such episodes as the Copernican Revolution. Muslim scholars, such as Maurice Bucaille, have tried to use naturalistic arguments in support of the Qur'an, thus opening the possibility of *naqli* type arguments constraining scientific inquiry, and making the notion of justification naturalistic and not merely moralistic.

This is a relatively recent approach, a modernist attempt to come to grips with science; but it does not necessarily reflect the classical Islamic position. Islamic history of science bears ample evidence to the fact that Islamic epistemology is not a hindrance to

¹ See Keith Lehrer, *Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

² In fact, the modes of reasoning and justification and, for that matter, knowledge in general, in the Islamic context are not subject to mere binary categorization. As elaborated many Muslim scholars such as al-Ghazālī (d. 505H), Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 543H) and al-Shāṭibī (d. 790H), to just mention a few, the grounds for knowledge and belief are rational, scriptural, experimental or a combination of two or more of these three categories. – Editor.

scientific inquiry. Furthermore, the notion of knowledge as justified, true belief is a contested notion even in the Western epistemological enterprise itself, given that one can drive a wedge between rationality/justification and truth. It is indeed possible for something to be rationally justified, but yet false. Or the converse could also hold, that is, something could be true, but given the existing state of knowledge, could not be rationally justified. For example, in the history of astronomy in the 16th century, the Copernican thesis that the earth revolves around the sun, could not be rationally justified in the absence of the concept of inertia and empirical verification of stellar parallax.

Although it can be argued that for the large part there is a high correlation between truth and justification, this empirical judgement can hardly be adduced in support of an epistemological thesis where certainty of knowledge remains a premium requirement. In my opinion, Qur'anic statements on natural phenomena are neither sufficiently specific nor metaphysically empty such as to create potential problems with regard to justification. Given the fact that Qur'anic statements are either categorical and definitive (*muhkam*), or allegorical (*mutashābih*), one has to first of all determine its status before making any pronouncement which has epistemological implications.¹

We now come to an examination of what I termed the 'scientistic position' in relation to knowledge, and look at its implications for Islamic epistemology. This position is generally associated with the Logical Positivists and Logical Empiricists, though its roots go back to the Enlightenment period. The proponents of this position regard natural and physical science as their model or ideal of knowledge, and believe that the scientific approach and method can be extended to the humanities and social sciences. They attempted to combine the doctrines of Rationalism and Empiricism, replacing Kantian rationalism with 'logicism', and accept only the rational and the empirical as foundations of

¹ Syed Muhammad Dawilah al-Edrus, *Islamic Epistemology: An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge in al-Qur'an* (Cambridge: The Islamic Academy, and Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1992), pp. 97-98.

knowledge. Although Logical Positivism as a philosophical school of thought is no longer in fashion, belief in the rational and the empirical as the only genuine foundations of knowledge seems to have been retained in the 'secular' academic tradition.

For example, Ernest Gellner, who was by no means a logical positivist, accepts what he calls *Enlightenment rationalism*, as his epistemological position and rejects revelation as a foundation for knowledge.¹ Karl Popper also, though a strong critic if not destroyer of Logical Positivism, accepted rationalism and empiricism as the true foundations of knowledge.² Apart from accepting rationalism and empiricism as the only genuine foundations of knowledge, the "scientistic" position also advocates the extension and application of the methods of the natural sciences to the humanities and social sciences.³ In its extreme form as found in Logical Positivism, metaphysics is to be expunged and even the humanities are to be explained and understood within a 'metaphysics-free' framework. How such an undertaking can be actually implemented remains a problem in view of the fact that metaphysical beliefs constitute an *empirical* part of human communities and influence group behaviour. With respect to Islamic epistemology, there are two things to be said here. Firstly, internal problems besetting the scientistic position make it unlikely to pose a serious threat to rival epistemologies. Secondly, while the extension of the methods of the natural to the social sciences might not be an issue for Islamic epistemology, the acceptance of only rationalism and empiricism might. How does someone hoping to defend Islamic epistemology cope with this?

To start with, it can be argued that Islam does not reject rationalism and empiricism as valid sources of knowledge. What it rejects is the claim that rationalism and empiricism are the *only*

¹ See Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992); and *Reason and Culture* (Oxford, UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1992).

² Karl R Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 1: *The Spell of Plato* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 224.

³ See Richard Olson, *Science Deified and Science Defied: the Historical Significance of Science in Western Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Tom Sorrell, *Scientism: Philosophy and the Infatuation with Science* (London: Routledge, 1991).

valid methods of knowledge. This rejection, of course, does not affect the Muslim attempt to acquire knowledge of the so-called 'secular' sciences. It does not forbid him or her to study physics, economics, mathematics, etc., or to carry out research in those fields using the rational and empirical approaches, which is a by-product of the globalization of knowledge and scientific research. But the Islamic perspective on knowledge does provide him or her with an *orientation* towards knowledge, and of how to fit that knowledge with the rest of his or her belief and value system.

It is in this context that I think the effort towards the Islamization of Knowledge should be understood. In Islam, unlike in Western theories of knowledge, there exists a close relationship between epistemology and ethics. The search for knowledge and truth is bound to ethics. One cannot obtain religious knowledge and enlightenment for instance without observing ethical practices and conduct. Even in the field of science as it is practised in the West, the production of scientific knowledge is predicated upon the acceptance of a certain group ethics such as the openness of critical inquiry. According to Popper, "Ethics is not a science. But although there is no 'rational scientific basis' of ethics, there is an ethical basis of science, and of rationalism".¹ In Islam, the subservience of epistemology to ethics ensures its immunity from abuse, and directs knowledge in the service of mankind, who ultimately serves and worships God. In practice, what this amounts to is that the pursuit of knowledge has to be guided by Islamic values and norms, not that the *content* of knowledge is necessarily determined by Islamic injunctions.

The attempt towards the Islamization of Knowledge seems to be a systematic response towards meeting this challenge. Muslim thinkers have taken several different routes in attempting to meet this challenge. The Algerian thinker Malik Bennabi (1905-1973), for instance, undertook a scholarly study of what he called the 'Qur'anic phenomenon', and Muhammad's prophethood. In fact, he subtitled his book, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, with the phrase 'an

¹ Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 2: "Hegel and Marx" (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971b), p. 238.

essay of theory on the Qur'an'.¹ Similarly, the French Muslim Maurice Bucaille sought to show how certain Qur'anic passages are verified by contemporary science.² I regard these as attempts towards the 'rationalization' of the Qur'an, perhaps with a view to making it acceptable to the modern mind. On the other extreme, the Iranian scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr, adopting the 'traditionalist' approach, did not attempt to 'modernize' Islam and the Qur'an by seeking to accommodate Islamic thought to modernism or vice versa, but sought instead to develop a metaphysical account of Islamic thought and philosophy, though resembling neo-Platonism in some ways, which insulates itself from modernism. The 'third way' relates to the contemporary Muslim programme of the 'Islamization of knowledge'.³

As a reaction to modernism and Enlightenment epistemology, there has emerged a new philosophical thinking loosely labeled as "Postmodernist". Under this general rubric can be included philosophies such as phenomenology, existentialism, and deconstructionism. Although Postmodernism does not pose the same kind of challenge as modernist epistemologies, and on the surface might appear accommodative of 'alternative epistemologies' including the Islamic, its humanistic and relativistic character makes it uncongenial to Islamic epistemology. Postmodernism is anti-foundationalist and against all types of "meta-narratives", including the Islamic. It would definitely not go down well with attempts towards the theologizing and 'divinization' of knowledge.

Furthermore, the humanist strain in phenomenological and existential epistemologies would negate the Islamic view of the supremacy of the God-head and man's subservience to Him. Thus, although postmodernism serves as an interesting antidote to the scientistic modernism of classical Western epistemology, it remains

¹ See: Malik Bennabi, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon: An Essay of theory on the Qur'an*.

² See: Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science: the Holy Scriptures Examined in the Light of Modern Knowledge* (Paris: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 2003) and *What Is the Origin of Man?* (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc., 1998). – Editor.

³ See *Knowledge* Mohamed Aslam Haneef, *A Critical Survey of Islamization*, (Kuala Lumpur: Research Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2005). – Editor.

at odds with attempts to privilege the Transcendent Divine, including the Islamic. However, it cannot be denied that there exists a certain potentiality and possibility for certain variants of Phenomenology and Existentialism, that would accommodate themselves to a religious world-view. This is possible through a theistic version of Existentialism or a Phenomenology that admits of spiritual consciousness, as opposed to the Husserlian search for 'objective consciousness' that merely transposes the language of objectivity of the external world on the internal self.

Conclusion

We have surveyed the historical relationship between knowledge and power in the encounter between Islam and the West. We have also briefly looked at the various epistemological positions, in their relation to Islamic epistemology. These are conducted with a view to understanding how contemporary knowledge in the West – which has tended to become 'mainstream', partly because of 'globalization' – fares against the Islamic perspective on knowledge. Based on the afore-mentioned analysis, my conclusion is that the Islamic perspective, whose inspiration derives from the Qur'an, remains relevant even in the face of current epistemologies. This is not to say, however, that the Islamic perspective is in complete agreement with those epistemologies, or that there exist no problems in the attempt to relate the two. The force of contemporary knowledge, which cannot be totally ignored, has compelled Muslim thinkers to face this epistemological challenge head on.

Admittedly, there are more than one version in this 'third way' itself. To me, this holds out some promise in the attempt by Muslims to come to grips with the phenomena of contemporary knowledge. Even within the bosom of the Western intellectual tradition itself, there have been soul-searching attempts towards re-thinking the Enlightenment ideals and its alternatives. Critical theory, lead by Jurgen Habermas and the Frankfurt School, and the deconstructionism of Derrida and Foucault, are some outstanding examples. Perhaps the Islamic critique of knowledge, guided as it were by spiritual insights and the recognition of the

materiality of life, could provide a better alternative to both modernism and postmodernism as they are currently projected in the West. The onus, however, lies on Muslim intellectuals to prove that this is the case.

CHAPTER 6

مفهوم الحضارة العالمية بوصفها وحدة للتحليل عند مالك بن نبي

عبد العزيز برغوث

مقدمة

يحاول هذا البحث إثارة بعض الأسئلة الأساسية حول مسألة "وحدة التحليل" في مجال الدراسات الحضارية، ومناهج التحليل التاريخي، مع اعتبار الآثار العميقة والمتسارعة لظاهرة "العولمة" في الوعي والفكر ومناهج التحليل والممارسات الثقافية والحضارية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية والسياسية. هناك تساؤلات كبرى تثور حول الأنساق النظرية والمناهج التحليلية المطلوبة لدراسة الظواهر الإنسانية والتاريخية والثقافية. فعندما نتبع التطور التاريخي لمناهج التحليل الحضاري بصورة عامة نجدها قد اتخذت - عبر التاريخ - من القبيلة والدولة والحضارة وحداتٍ تحليلٍ ترصد من خلالها حركة المجتمع وصيرورة التاريخ والوعي والأفكار. والإشكال الذي يثور إزاء عملية عولمة العالم المعاصر وفق النموذج الحضاري الغربي هو: هل يمكن أن تستمر الحضارة وحدةً تحليلٍ للفعل التاريخي والحضاري في ظل تحول العالم إلى قرية كونية واحدة؟

لذلك يسعى البحث إلى رصد بعض التحولات الكبرى في الوعي والفكر والممارسة والمناهج، وهو الأمر الذي يستدعي إعادة النظر في وحدة التحليل. ويفترض البحث أن وحدة التحليل ينبغي أن تنتقل من المفهوم الجزئي

"للحضارة" إلى المفهوم الكلي لها؛ أي "الحضارة العالمية". وهذا يتطلب تحويراً جوهرياً على المستوى المعرفي والمنهجي والثقافي. ونظراً لاهتمام مالك بن نبي عليه رحمه الله بمناهج التحليل الحضاري عامة وبمسألة وحدة التحليل بصورة خاصة، فإن هذا البحث سيتوقف - بصورة خاصة - عند أطروحاته في هذا المجال. فقد تحدث هذا المفكر بصورة واضحة قبل نصف قرن عن "الحضارة العالمية كوحدة للتحليل التاريخي"، وعليه فمن المهم جداً الوقوف على رؤيته لارتباطها المباشر بوضع الأمة وحضارتها.

مفهوم الحضارة العالمية بوصفها وحدة للتحليل

أول قضية من قضايا التحديد الحضاري في عصر الشمولية والعالمية والكونية هي قضية الوحدة التحليلية التي تصلح لتكون إطاراً منهجياً نحلل ضمنه مسائل التحديد والتحضر والاجتماع الإنساني والتاريخ عموماً. والمقصود بوحدة التحليل بصورة عامة هو ذلك الإطار النظري العام بكل مفرداته وقواعده ومبادئه وضوابطه ومفاهيمه التي تُستخدم لمعالجة الإشكالات والتساؤلات التي تطرح علينا في سياق البحث في قضايا التحديد والمجتمع والإنسان والثقافة والتاريخ. فمثلاً نحن نعلم أن "الدولة" هي وحدة التحليل التي استخدمها ابن خلدون في تحليله لحركة المجتمع والحضارة والعمران البشري، وذلك باعتبارها مقولة تحليلية أساسية ناقش في ضوءها كثيراً من قوانين العمران ومبادئ الاجتماع الإنساني، وسنن الحركة الاجتماعية والتاريخية. وقد استطاع هذا المفكر الرائد أن يدلنا على كثير من قوانين الاجتماع البشري على الرغم من تركيز إطاره التحليلي أو وحدته التحليلية المنهجية على مسألة "الدولة".

ثم أتى مفكرون ومنظرون آخرون نظروا إلى وحدة التحليل هذه في نطاق أوسع وأشمل من موضوع الدولة وإطارها النظري ومفاهيمها وأدواتها التحليلية. فتحدث مالك بن نبي من منطلق الفكر الإسلامي وأرنولد توينبي في سياق الفكر الأوروبي

خاصة والغربي عامة، عن "الحضارة" باعتبارها وحدة لتحليل التاريخ وحركة المجتمعات، تقدم إطاراً أشمل وأوسع لدراسة قوانين العمران وسنن الفعل الحضاري وتطور المجتمعات الإنسانية ومظاهر التغير الثقافي الذي يعترئها. فأصبحت الحضارة بمفرداتها، وعناصرها، ومفاهيمها، ونظرياتها، وأدواتها، ومناهجها، وأساليبها، ووسائلها، إطاراً تحليلياً علمياً ومنهجياً لدراسة قضايا التاريخ والثقافة والاجتماع والإنسان والعمران والمدنية.

ومع التطورات الحاصلة في الوعي والفكر والمناهج والمعارف والتقنيات والوسائل والنظم والإدارة بدأت تظهر وحدة جديدة للتحليل لها أهميتها القصوى في دراسة الفكر والتاريخ والحضارة والاجتماع البشري في عصر العولمة والكونية والاتصال الشمولي للبشرية. لقد كان مالك بن نبي من أوائل الذين تحدثوا عن هذه القضية ببعد نظر كبير في إطار الفكر الإسلامي. وعلى الرغم من أهمية هذه المسألة لدراسة قضايا الحضارة والثقافة والاجتماع البشري في عصر العالمية، إلا أن العديد من الدارسين لفكره لم ينتبهوا إليها. والذي نراه في الدراسات والكتابات الصادرة حول فكر بن نبي هو التركيز على "الحضارة" بما هي وحدة للتحليل عنده. صحيح أن وحدة التحليل هذه ذات قيمة خاصة في سائر كتاباته، حيث نجد كثيراً من أفكاره تدور حول مسألة الحضارة، إلا أن إغفال بعضهم وعي بن نبي لهذا البعد الجديد في وحدة التحليل قد يُبقي فكره ومشروعه حبيس إطار التحليل الحضاري التقليدي المعهود، الأمر الذي ينتج عنه تغييب كثير من الملامح والأبعاد المشرقة والعالمية في فكره. فبن نبي يعد بحق من الرواد القلائل الذين انتبهوا بعمق ووعي إلى مفهوم "الحضارة العالمية" بوصفها وحدة جديدة للتحليل الثقافي والتاريخي والاجتماعي. وما يثار اليوم من جدل حول تأثير العولمة في مناهج البحث الاجتماعي والإنساني ما هو إلا أثر يسير

من آثار العالمية، وتحلّ أولى من تجلياتها التي ستلاحق كلما امتد الوعي البشري في مستقبل الحضارة وإنجازاتها النوعية الجبارة.

تمثل "الحضارة العالمية" في الإطار النظري والمنهج التحليلي لمالك بن نبي مفهوماً أساسياً لدراسة قضايا التجديد الحضاري للأمة ولل البشرية جميعاً. فدراسة التاريخ والحضارة والاجتماع البشري عنده ينبغي أن تكون في إطار وحدة "الحضارة العالمية" وما يرتبط بها من مفاهيم ومفردات وأدوات تحليلية جديدة. وعلى الرغم من أنه في بدايات فكره قد نظر إلى مسائل الحضارة الإسلامية والحضارة المسيحية والحضارة الهندية والبوذية من منظور جزئي؛ أي "الحضارة ذاتها كوحدة للتحليل". إلا أنه لم يغيب عن أفاقه الفكري أبداً أن إطاراً جديداً للتحليل كان قد بدأ يتشكل في الوعي البشري هو "الحضارة العالمية"؛ وهو أمر من شأنه أن يعمق وعينا، ويوسع دائرة رؤيتنا، ويرتفع بإدراكنا الفكري إلى مستوى القضايا العالمية الكبرى، فلا يبقى نظرنا إلى قوانين الحضارة والتاريخ والإنسان والثقافة والمجتمع وال عمران منحصراً في إطار الدولة ولا في إطار المفهوم الجزئي أو الإقليمي للحضارة. وإنما يتم ذلك من خلال منظور واسع يعانق هموم الإنسانية ومشكلاتها وتطلعاتها في عمومها وشوئها، في القيم والتشريع والقانون والعلاقات الدولية والاجتماعية، وفي الاقتصاد والسياسة، وفي التربية والتعليم، وغير ذلك من مجالات الحياة كلها؛ أي في إطار "الحضارة العالمية".

ولذلك يرى بن نبي أن تحولات القرن العشرين قد أسهمت في إحداث تحول نوعي في وعينا ورؤيتنا إلى قضايا الحضارة والعالم، وأن هذا التحول النوعي الكبير أدى إلى "إنشاء بصورة ما مجالاً ثالثاً، هو المجال الذي يتحتم فيه على كل ثقافة أدركت حقيقة مشكلاتها الداخلية والاتصالية، أن تدرك حقيقة مشكلات أخرى على مستوى عالمي".¹ وبعبارة أخرى ينبغي أن "ترد مشكلة الحضارة إلى المستوى العالمي... ومن الناحية

¹ مالك بن نبي، مشكلة الثقافة، ترجمة عبد الصبور شاهين (دمشق: دار الفكر، ط4، 1984)، ص 116.

الاجتماعية تدل على وجوب تحقيق هذا الوضع في صورة "حضارة عالمية".¹

أسس اعتبار مفهوم الحضارة العالمية وحدة للتحليل

ولكي نتبين هذا المنحى في فكر بن نبي نقتبس نصاً طويلاً من كتابه الذي ألفه بمناسبة انعقاد مؤتمر باندونغ الذي تحمّرت فيه نواة حركة عدم الانحياز، ففي هذا النص نجد نظيراً واضحاً ومتماسكاً لبناء هذه الوحدة الجديدة في التحليل الحضاري والتاريخي على الرغم من عدم تصريحه بها بصورة واضحة. يقول بن نبي في تأملاته حول المنطق العالمي الجديد للحضارة الإنسانية:

"لقد كانت الحضارة من عمل اللاشعور عند الفرد، وهو العمل الذي لا يجند وعيه الموضوعي إلا بصفة استثنائية عند بعض المؤرخين وعلماء الاجتماع، مثل ابن خلدون، أعني عند الخصيص الذي جعل من الحضارة موضوعاً للدراسة، ومشكلةً للتحلية والإيضاح. ولكن الحضارة قد أصبحت مع الثقافة الغربية هدفاً مقصوداً، وعملاً شعورياً وفناً ووظيفة اجتماعية للإنسان تتطلب ذكاءه وإرادته، وهو يرى فيها غايته الأرضية. هذه الذاتية الجديدة قد وسعت أولاً حقل الحضارة نفسها، حين مدته من النطاق القومي والعنصري إلى النطاق العالمي الإنساني. ولكن الغرب حين حقق امتداد الحضارة في المكان بفضل قوته الصناعية قد أحدث تحولاً في طبيعتها التاريخية. فلم تعد الحضارة فيما يبدو خاضعة لقانون "الدورات" كما كانت في عصر ابن خلدون، وأيضاً في عصر سبنجلر عندما كان يكتب عن "أفول الغرب".

ولو راجعنا - في ضوء التطورات الأخيرة - رأي فاليري في الوقت الذي كان فيه يتأمل النتائج المتوقعة للحرب العالمية الأولى، حين عبر عنها في تلك الصورة

¹ مالك بن نبي، فكرة الإفريقية الآسيوية في ضوء مؤتمر باندونغ، ترجمة عبد الصبور شاهين (دمشق: دار الفكر، 1981/1403)، ص 200-201.

المأثورة: "الآن أدركنا نحن أن الحضارات فانيات.."، لو راجعنا رأي فاليري اليوم لوجدناه قد أخطأ؛ إذ في ذلك الوقت لم تعد الحضارة لتكون فانية لأن نطاقها قد بدلها خلقاً آخر، فأصبحت عالمية، وبذلك صارت خالدة. ومع ذلك ففي الوقت الذي أراد فيه جون أرنولد تويني أن يختتم كتابه الرائع "دراسة التاريخ"، كانت ظاهرة "الدورات" لا تزال ذات وزن في استنتاجاته. ففي استنتاجه عن مستقبل الحضارة الغربية، لم يكن عقله كمؤرخ على وفاق مع ضميره بوصفه كإنسان غربي. فقد كان المؤرخ مأخوذاً فيما يبدو بفكرة الأفلو، ولكن الإنسان يتجاوز هذا الخوف حين يصوغ للحضارة الغربية أمنية في ألا تغرق بدورها في محاولة "إنقاذ بالسيف"، وهي محاولة قد تنتج عن غريزة الدفاع عن النفس. فهو يتمنى أن تصل مباشرة إلى "نظام عالمي يقرب من ذلك الميثاق الذي دعا إليه بعض المسئولين والفلاسفة الهلينيون خلال عصر الاضطرابات"... وإذا كانت أمنية الإنسان تذهب إلى هذا المدى البعيد، فذلك لأن المؤرخ الكبير يرى في منعطف التاريخ الحالي أو يستشعر التحول الذي يجتاز بالإنسانية المرحلة الثانية من تطورها، بعد التحول الذي دخلت به التاريخ في بداية العصر الحجري الجديد، فهو يرى أن التطور الذي حول المجتمع البدائي في نهاية العصر الثلجي (Glaciaire) إلى مجتمع من طراز جديد، أي إلى "الحضارة" يمكن الآن أن يحول هذه الحضارة إلى طراز جديد هو "الحضارة العالمية". وهذا التحول قد يغير توقعات التاريخ تغييراً تاماً، بحيث لا يدع معه مجالاً لافتراض "الأفلو"، إذ إن في التوقع الجديد لن يكون أماننا سوى افتراض الكسوف الكلي والنهائي الذي لا يمكن أن تقوم به "ههضة". فمشكلة الحضارة تُصاغ حيثُذ في مصطلحات تستبعد مراحل التعديل. وتستبعد "عودتها" التي احتفظت بها حتى الآن حين دارت دورتها خلال آلاف السنين. ويوضح هذا أن الموجة الأوروبية قد حملت بذور الحضارة إلى أركان العالم القصية، وأخصب غريبتها القارات كلها، وأن الحضارات إنما كانت "فانية" حين كان لكل منها حقلها الخاص،

وهو عموماً في حدود إمبراطورية، وكان حاملُ رسالتها الفكرية لا يتجاوز عبقرية جنس ما. فكان الأفلو يحدث مع انهيار الإمبراطورية، ومع افتقار العبقرية العاجزة عن أن تتجدد بفعل عناصر أرضها وحدها، فإن البذور التي تعود لتلقي دائماً في الأرض نفسها تنتهي بالانقراض وفقدان الحيوية. أما اليوم فإن البذرة قد انتشرت في كل مكان، ولقد يتضاءل جنينُ هنا، ولكنه ينضج وينمو هناك. فنحن نصادف دائماً أشكالاً من المقاصة تحتفظ بالحضارة في مستواها وفي حيويتها، حائلةً بينها وبين الأفلو، وتلك هي نتيجة توحيد المشكلة الإنسانية. ولقد حققت العبقرية الغربية هذا التوحيد حين أوصلت مقدرة الإنسان إلى المستوى العالمي، وهو يتجلى في حياة كلِّ شعب، وفي تشكيلاته السياسية، وفي ألوان نشاطه العقلي والفني والاجتماعي. فالمقاييس وطرائق السلوك والتفكير لا تكف عن التقارب على محور طنجة جاكرتا ومحور واشنطن-موسكو.¹

إن هذا النص في حقيقته تأسيسٌ عميق لوحدة تحليل جديدة في مجال الدراسات الحضارية والاجتماعية والتاريخية، وهو يتضمن جملة قواعد ومبادئ أساسية ينبغي استصحابها ونحن ندرس الحضارة العالمية بوصفها وحدة لتحليل الفعل الحضاري والتاريخي. ويمكن تلخيص تلك القواعد والمبادئ فيما يأتي:

1. تحول مسألة الحضارة من كونها عملاً لا شعورياً إلى كونها عملاً شعورياً وفناً علمياً يقوم به العقل البشري. والمقصود بكون الحضارة فناً لا شعورياً أنها كانت غاية ومثالاً لا يدركه إلا الخاصة من العلماء والمفكرين الذين جعلوا البحث في قضية الحضارة موضوعاً للعملهم الذهني وتخصصهم العلمي، إلا أنها بالنسبة إلى الإنسان العادي لم تكن إلا حلمًا يخامر شعوره وواقعه، ومن ثم كانت مجرد أمل عسير التحقق وطموح عزيز المنال. فالحضارة بهذا المفهوم كانت غاية وهدفاً يصبو الإنسان إلى تحقيقه عبر مجاهدات ومكابدات لسلسلة غير متناهية من العوائق والصعوبات

¹ بن نبي، فكرة الأفريقية الآسيوية، ص 257-260.

التي تجعل الكثير من الناس يفقدون الأمل في تحقيقها. لقد كانت الحضارة حلماً بعيداً وغاية عسيرة المنال، ولهذا عبر عنها بن نبي بقوله إنها "عمل لا شعوري"؛ أي ليس في متناول الجميع، ولكن تستهوي من العلماء والخاصة من يروم مواجهة الصعاب ومكابدة المشاق بحثاً في مشكلاتها وسعياً للكشف عن قوانينها.

ولكن بسبب التحولات الكبرى في الوعي البشري والقيم الإنسانية والإنجازات الحضارية المعاصرة في مختلف المجالات، أصبحت الحضارة موضوعاً اجتماعياً؛ أي أن الحضارة بعدما كانت من عمل اللاشعور أصبحت عملاً شعورياً واقعياً ملموساً. فلقد أصبحت هماً يومياً للإنسان، وهدفاً عملياً يجتهد لتحقيقه وتحصيله. وهكذا أصبحت الحضارة جزءاً لا يتجزأ من وعي الإنسان وواقعه وكفاحه اليومي. فالإنسان أصبح مع التطورات الحضارية الحديثة يرى الحضارة وظيفة اجتماعية يسخر لها كل قدراته وطاقاته وإمكاناته العقلية والفكرية وملكاته الذهنية والروحية. إن هذه الذاتية الجديدة للحضارة قد أدت إلى توسيع نطاق الوعي البشري وأفق من النطاق الذاتي للحضارة، ومن الأفق العنصري والمحلي والثقافي الخاص لمجتمع معين إلى النطاق الإنساني العالمي الواسع. وهذا في حد ذاته تحول جوهري في قيمة الحضارة ومفهومها ومضامينها. فكما أنه بالدرجة الأولى توسيع للعقل والذهن والفكر في المكان والزمان، فهو كذلك توسيع لمفهوم الحضارة. إن كل هذا التوسيع والتحويل في أفق الحضارة ذاتها يعني تحولاً جوهرياً في نظام الحضارة.

2. هذه الذاتية الجديدة للحضارة وهذا الحضور العملي العضوي لها في حياة الإنسان وفي وعيه لذاته، وفي نطاقه ومجاله الشخصي والعالمي الواسع، قد ولدت فهماً جديداً لنظام الحضارة ونواميسها. فالحضارة سواء في نطاقها وأفقها القديم أو في ظل إدراكنا لها بوصفها وحدة للتحليل، كانت تتبع نظام الدورات المتعاقبة الخاضعة لقانون الميلاد والصعود والأوج والأفول. ولكن يبدو أن هذا التحول قد

غير حتى الطبيعة الخاصة للحضارة وبعثها خلقاً جديداً، فاتجهت على ما يبدو إلى تجاوز منطق الدورة، ومنطق الأفعال والفناء، لتصبح ذات استمرار نسبي يجعلها تنتشر وتتوسع وتعيد إنتاج نفسها بصورة تجنّبها السقوط والأفول. إن النطاق الجديد للحضارة جعلها عالمية الأفق والمدى، وما دامت عالمية بقاؤها يصبح جزءاً من تركيبها ووجودها من حيث ارتباطها بالعالم وليس أمراً خارجاً عنها. فالعالمية جعلت بقاء الحضارة واستمرارها وعدم أفولها خاصية من خصائصها الذاتية، بحيث أصبح بقاؤها جزءاً من تركيبها الجديد وصيرورتها التاريخية. وبعبارة أخرى لقد وصلت الحضارة إلى نوع من الاستقرار والتشكيل الذاتي والنظام، بحيث تحولت إلى نظام عالمي لازم للوجود البشري في عصر العالمية. وكأن الحضارة مع عصر العالمية أصبحت لازمة وجودية لا تقوم بدونها حياة الإنسان.

3. إن هذا التشكيل الجديد للحضارة وهذا التحول في ماهيتها ليس مجرد طفرة أفرزتها عوامل خارجة عن نطاق الوعي التاريخي والاجتماعي للإنسان، وإنما هو تحول منطقي تابع للمسار العام للوجود البشري في العالم، وهو كذلك لازمة من لوازم نمو الوعي البشري والوجود الإنساني على الأرض. فمالك بن نبي يرى أن هذا التحول منطقي وممكن، إذا ما أخذنا بعين الاعتبار التطور العام للإنسانية.

4. يرى بن نبي أن قانون الدورة وقانون أفعال الحضارة وفنائها إنما كان يطبق في إطار ومحيط اجتماعي مشروط باتصال الحضارة بواقع اجتماعي معين، وفي نطاق جغرافي محدد هو نطاق الدولة أو المجتمع أو الإمبراطورية. ففي هذا الحقل الخاص كان قانون الدورة فاعلاً وحيوياً في نقل قيم الحضارة من مكان إلى آخر، ومن إمبراطورية إلى أخرى. فكانت الحضارة في نطاقها الجغرافي الخاص تهاجر من بقعة إلى أخرى كلما انتفت عوامل استمرارها في مكانها الأول، وتشكلت تلك العوامل في الواقع الجديد. فالرسالة الفكرية للحضارة والإشعاع الثقافي لها كان لا

يتجاوز النطاق الإمبراطوري المحدد لجنس معين، فكانت الحضارة تخصب هناك في نطاق الإمبراطورية، وكانت ثمارها الأساسية تعود إلى حقلها الخاص. ولكن هذا لا يمنع نوعاً من الإشعاع على المجتمعات المجاورة أو على المجتمعات البعيدة خلال مدد زمنية متطاولة، وانتقال قيم الحضارة بطرائق معينة إلى المجتمعات الأخرى.

إن أفول الحضارة وهجرتها من مكان إلى آخر كان مرتبطاً بضعف الإمبراطوريات وانحلالها وسقوطها. وكذلك بعدم قدرة عبقريتها الخاصة وخبرتها الذاتية الخاصة المتصلة بثقافتها وواقعها وممارستها وفعلها الحضاري على معالجة أسباب الأفول وعوامل الانحطاط وتجاوزها، وإبداع عوامل التجدد والبقاء والاستمرار، واكتشاف قوانين التجدد الذاتي للحضارة. وهكذا فلا تستطيع الإمبراطوريات بعبقريتها تدارك الأمر حتى يعتريها الاضمحلال ويلفها قدر الأفول والفاء، تبعاً لانحلال مجتمعها ونكوصه عن مسيرتها، بحيث يحل محله مجتمع آخر قد توافرت فيه الشروط واستقامت له الموازين.

إن هذا العجز والنقص في فهم قوانين التجديد وقوانين علاج الهرم الحضاري، واستعادة الحيوية الحضارية هو نفسه الذي حدا بابن خلدون أن يصوغ قانونه الصارم في شأن أفول الحضارات. فحين نظر صاحب المقدمة بفكره الثاقب في قوانين العمران والاجتماع الإنساني وصل إلى خلاصته المحزنة في شأن مسألة الأفول الحضاري حيث قال:

"وفي هذا الطور تحصل في الدولة طبيعة الهرم، ويستولي عليها المرض المزمن الذي لا تكاد تخلص منه، ولا يكون لها معه برء، إلى أن تنقرض كما نبينه في الأحوال التي نسردها. والله خير الوارثين."¹

¹ عبد الرحمن ابن خلدون، مقدمة ابن خلدون، تحقيق عبد الواحد وافي (القاهرة: دار تحفة مصر للطبع والنشر، د.ت، ط 3)، ج2، ص556.

إن ابن خلدون في الحقيقة لم يجانب الصواب كثيراً إذا ما أخذنا بعين الاعتبار وعيه وفكره وواقعه وزمانه ومناهج التحليل التي اعتمدها ووحدة التحليل التي استخدمها. ففي تحليله للمسألة الحضارية كان على وفاق تام مع مستوى الوعي الفكري والأفق المعرفي لعصره. لقد كان صادقاً في إدراكه وفهمه لقانون أفول الحضارات، بحيث قدم لنا مثلاً واقعياً عن كيفية انحلال الدول وأفولها إلى غير رجعة، وكأنما الأفول هو القدر الجاري عليها منذ الأزل وهو باق إلى الأبد كما تصور صاحب أطروحة علم العمران. إننا لا نجانب الصواب إذا قررنا أن مجتمعات تلك الحضارات لم تتمكن من تطوير فقه في دراسة الحضارة يمكن أن نسميه فقه بقاء الحضارة أو فقه الاستمرار الحضاري.

ففي الإطار التحليلي الجديد نرى أن فكرة الدورة ومسألة الأفول وهجرة الحضارة أصبحت قابلة للمراجعة في ضوء ما توصلنا إليه من فقه جديد فيما يتعلق بدراسة الحضارة. فمفهوم الحضارة العالمية، وما حققته البشرية من نضج ووسائل وأدوات وتقنيات ومعارف، وما شكلته من ظروف اجتماعية وثقافية واقتصادية وسياسية وتقنية جديدة قد أصبحت تؤثر بصورة قوية في تصورنا لقانوني الدورة والأفول ونظرتنا إليهما. فمالك يلاحظ ظاهرة مهمة وهي ظاهرة الاستمرار الحضاري وظاهرة التجدد والحيوية. فبدلاً من أن يلف الفناء والأفول هذه الحضارة أو تلك، فإن نوعاً من التفاعل والتكامل يؤدي إلى التجديد الذاتي للحضارات فتبقى دائماً محافظة على الحد الأدنى من عوامل نموها واستمرارها وبقائها، بحيث تتكامل الحضارات ويسند بعضها بعضاً فتضعف هنا وتضمحل هناك، ولكن سرعان ما تتجدد وتقوى مرة أخرى، وهذا ما سماه مالك بن نبي بالمقاسة، حيث يقول:

"فإن البذور التي تعود لتلقى دائماً في الأرض قد انتشرت في كل مكان، ولقد يتضاءل جنين هنا، ولكنه ينضج وينمو هناك. فنحن نصادف دائماً

أشكالاً من المقاصة تحتفظ بالحضارة في مستواها وفي حيويتها.¹

إن ظاهرة **المقاصة** والتجدد تعكس اتجاه البشرية، واتجاه الحضارة الإنسانية من واقع الخصوصية والجزئية إلى واقع **الحضارة العالمية الكلية** وثقافتها. ولو أردنا أن نعبر عن هذه الظاهرة بلغة دقيقة لقلنا إنها في عمقها تعبر عن **فقه سنن الاستمرار الحضاري والتجديد الذاتي للحضارات**. فالمقاصة عملية حضارية تحول دون الأفول الحضاري، وتعمل على استعادة الحضارة حيويتها وتجدها بعد أن تكون قد وصلت إلى وضع يُنذر بالأفول. وعليه فيدرك هذه المقاصة هو الفقه اللازم الذي يسمح للمجتمع بفهم سنن الاستمرار الحضاري والعمل وفق مقتضياتها عبر عملية تجدد حضاري ذاتي.

إن ظاهرة المقاصة أو فقه سنن البقاء والاستمرار والتجدد المطرد - كما قرر بن نبي - يعبر في الحقيقة عن نهاية فكرة الدورات الحضارية، ونهاية فكرة هجرة الحضارة من مكان إلى آخر، لتصبح الحضارة عالمية حاضرة في الواقع الإنساني العام. ومن ثم تبقى المشكلة الأساسية أمام كل مجتمع هي مدى فاعليته في التجديد الحضاري، والاستفادة من قيم الحضارة العالمية وحضورها. فالحضارة العالمية اليوم تنشر قيمها في كل العالم، وتضع وسائلها وأدواتها وتقانتها وخبراتها ومعارفها ونظمها وآلياتها وأدواتها في متناول البشرية جميعاً، بحيث أصبح الأمر اليوم أكثر ارتحاناً بالمجتمعات نفسها وبسياساتها ومشاريعها ورؤاها إزاء الحضارة، ومدى الاستعداد للإفادة منها. وقد بدأت تتطور خبرات ووسائل ومصادر عالمية فاعلة تنقل قيم الحضارة من مكان إلى آخر، ومن واقع إلى آخر، على نحو غير معهود في تاريخ الإنسانية ومراحل تطورها السابقة.

وإذا كنا في وحدة التحليل الحضاري التقليدي نحاول تطوير نظرية ومنهج

¹ مالك بن نبي، فكرة الأفريقية الآسيوية، ص 260.

تحليلي لدراسة الحضارة كمركب اجتماعي ونفسي وعمراني وثقافي وسياسي واقتصادي وجغرافي وعلائقي واتصالي، وكواقع إنساني معقد ومركب جدا، وكتشكيل بشري متنوع يتضمن ثقافات وأجناس وعقليات وتركيبات ذهنية متنوعة ومختلفة؛ إننا اليوم ينبغي أن نبحث في نظرية ومنهج تحليلي لدراسة الحضارة العالمية. وإذا كانت وحدة التحليل الحضاري، تدرس الحضارات الإنسانية منفردة كوحدات مستقلة عن بعضها البعض أو في صلتها مع بعضها البعض مع المحافظة على استقلالية وتميز كل حضارة، وإذا كانت وحدة التحليل الحضاري تتعامل مع الحضارة في تجانسها وتناغمها وتشكيلها المرتد إلى أصولها هي ومرجعيتها وقيمها وتراثها.. فإذا كان هذا هو الأمر في شأن وحدة التحليل الحضاري؛ فإن الأمر أعقد وأعمق فيما يتعلق بوحدة التحليل الحضاري العالمي. ففي وحدة التحليل الحضاري العالمي لا ينبغي لنا أن ندرس فقط حضارة واحدة مستقلة، ولكن أن ندرس مجموعة الحضارات الإنسانية المتعاصرة، ونبحث في السنن والقوانين التي تحكم هذا الوجود الحضاري الجماعي العالمي المتشابه في أبعاده المعنوية والمادية المختلفة.

آفاق وحدة التحليل بين الدورة الحضارية والحضارة العالمية

إذا كنا في إطار التحليل الحضاري نحاول تطوير نظرية للحضارة تكشف لنا عن منطقها ونظامها الداخلي وقانونها العام، ونسق صيرورتها الاجتماعية، ونظام تحولها وتقلبها، سواء وفق نظام الدورات الحضارية أو وفق نظام الانتكاس والتراجع المتشائم أو التقدم المستمر المتفائل، أو نظام التغير النوعي أو نظام الصيرورة النوعية، وإذا كنا في ذلك الإطار أيضاً نبحث عن قوانين الميلاد الحضاري والصعود الحضاري والأفول الحضاري، وإذا كنا كذلك نبحث عن قوانين هجرة الحضارة والتداول الحضاري وانتقال قيم الحضارة من أرض إلى أخرى ومن مجتمع إلى آخر، فإننا في إطار التحليل الحضاري العالمي نبحث عن

نظرية للحضارة العالمية تكشف لنا الأمور الآتية:

1. قانون الصيرورات الحضارية العالمية المتعددة التي تصب في الصيرورة الحضارية الكلية للبشرية باعتبارها بديلاً للصيرورة الحضارية للحضارة الواحدة أو المجتمع الواحد.

2. نظام التحولات الحضارية الجماعية العالمية بما هو بديل للتحول الحضاري الأحادي.

3. نظام الحضور والبقاء والمقاصة الحضارية المستمرة لكل الحضارات المتعاصرة بديلاً لنظام الدورات الحضارية التي تأفل فيه حضارة وتظهر أخرى على مسرح التاريخ.

4. نظام استقرار الحضارة واسترجاعها لحيوتها وتحددها بديلاً لنظام هجرة الحضارة وأفولها وتداولها.

إن اعتماد منطق وحدة "الحضارة العالمية" يقتضي تطوير نظرية حضارية تنتقل بالوعي الحضاري، والدرس الحضاري، والمعرفة الحضارية من منطق التداول الحضاري باعتباره هجرة لقيم الحضارة من مكان إلى آخر، ومن جماعة إنسانية إلى جماعة أخرى، إلى منطق التداول الحضاري باعتباره تحضراً مستمراً وتواصل لقيم الحضارة وتداولها بين الجميع في عصر العالمية. ولئن كان الإنسان في عهود الدورات الحضارية يستطيع أن يقهر غيره من أصحاب الحضارات الأخرى، وأن يبقى في المركز ويدفع بغيره إلى الهوامش، فإنه في زمن **الدورة الحضارية العالمية** لابد أن يبقى الجميع في مستوى حضاري معين له حدوده الدنيا التي لا يتعداها انحداراً وأفولاً، وتبقى مسألة الحدود العليا مفتوحة للفاعلين والمحدثين، ويصبح قانون التسابق الحضاري باتجاه الإحسان والفاعلية الحضارية الشاملة هو الذي يميز الحضارات الجزئية بعضها عن بعض. وهنا ينبغي أن نحافظ على الحد الأدنى من القيم الحضارية، والإمكان الحضاري والقدرة الحضارية لكل الثقافات، كما ينبغي أن نشكل نظاماً حضارياً شاملاً يسمح بإجراء المقاصة والمشاركة

والتفاعل الذي يحرك الجميع في اتجاه الإحسان والفاعلية الحضارية، ولو بنسب متفاوتة على حسب مكنة الحضارات الجزئية المختلفة وفعاليتها.

إن هذا المنطق يفرض حداً أدنى من التحضر ينبغي أن تصل إليه كل الحضارات والثقافات المتعاصرة في عصر العالمية حتى تتمكن الحضارة الإنسانية الشاملة من الاستمرار والبقاء المتوازن وتحقيق أعلى مستويات الفاعلية لقانون الاستمرار والمقاصة الحضارية. وهذه العتبة الدنيا من التحضر ينبغي أن تتوافر للجميع حتى يتطور وعي الحضارة العالمية ومنطقها بصورة متوازنة. وهذا التوازن الحضاري ينبغي أن يشمل جميع الثقافات الإنسانية، بحيث يصبح أي نزول عن ذلك المستوى الحضاري خرقاً لمنطق الحضارة العالمية ذاته. وبذلك تنفك فكرة المركز المتفرعن والهوامش المستضعفة المستعبدة، وتسود فكرة المركز المتحضر والهوامش السائرة في طريق التحضر أو القرية من التحضر. ومن ثم تصنف المجتمعات الإنسانية الحالية وفق وحدة التحليل الحضاري العالمي إلى مجتمعات متحضرة، وآخر في طور التحضر.

والمقصود بهذا التقسيم تأكيد فكرة أن المنطق المنفتح للحضارة العالمية سيزيد التقارب بين الثقافات، بحيث تنخرط كل الثقافات في عملية الاستفادة من منجزات الحضارة الإنسانية وخبراتها الثقافية والاجتماعية من أجل الدخول في عمليات تحديد وتحدد حضاري لكل الثقافات والمجتمعات بما يجعلها تسهم جميعاً في معالجة المشكلات الإنسانية الكبرى في عصر العالمية، تلك المشكلات التي أصبحت مشتركة بين مختلف الثقافات والشعوب، وأصبحت تفرض على الجميع أن يسهموا في علاجها لأنها مشكلات ذات طابع وتأثير عالميين. فهذه الوحدة في المشكلات الإنسانية، وهذا الوعي المشترك للمشكلات الإنسانية هما في الحقيقة صورة من صور تأثير منطق الحضارة العالمية وثقافتها في الإنسان والثقافة المعاصرة. وفي هذا السياق يقول بن نبي:

"فهناك دائماً وحدة في المشكلة الإنسانية تنبثق عن المصير المشترك، وهي من حيث كونها مجرد مفهوم ميتافيزيقي متفاوت في درجة وضوحه، كانت تجعل المؤرخ الذي يتجاهل هذا التصور للأشياء أو يعارضه في موقف يمكنه ويحق له فيه أن يجهلها. ولكنها قد أصبحت واقعاً مادياً، فوحدة التاريخ تتأكد في القرن العشرين بطريقة لا تدع مجالاً للفكرة الكلاسيكية المألوفة، فكرة "الوحدات التاريخية" المستقلة، حيث تفهم كل وحدة في حدودها، فلقد دخلت الإنسانية مرحلة لم يعد ممكناً فيها تحديد "مجال الدراسة" الخاص على طريقة جون توينبي J. Toynbee. ولعله للمرة الأولى ينبغي على التاريخ أن يضع مشكلته منهجياً في المصطلحات الميتافيزيقية. فالفكر الديني الذي أبعده التطور الديكاري وجهود الباحثين والعلماء عن نظريات التاريخ، قد عاد إليها بطرق عقلية، حتى [إننا] لو عبرنا في مصطلحاته عن المشكلة الأساسية التي تتصور طبقاً لها جميع المشكلات الأخرى لعبرنا عنها بمشكلة خلاص الجنس البشري، وتلك هي المرة الأولى التي تواجه فيها المشكلة مواجهةً كلية".¹

إن هذا التوجه نحو العالمية وهذه الوحدة في المشكلات الإنسانية، وهذا التلاحم والتلاقي والاشتراك في تحمل مسؤولية مصير البشرية ومسؤولية الحضارة، كل ذلك إنما هو ثمرة لواقع عالمي جديد بدأ يتشكل، ونتيجة منطقية لرسوخ قيم الحضارة العالمية ومفاهيمها في واقعنا الاجتماعي. فالقضية الكبرى هنا هي قضية المواجهة الحضارية الكلية للمشكلات الإنسانية في النطاق العالمي. ذلك أنه لم يعد ممكناً لأي مجتمع أن يستقل بعلاج مشكلاته وحده أو الانغلاق على ذاته، بل أصبح من الضروري أن يكون ذا حضور في دوائر الوعي المختلفة انطلاقاً من دائرة الوعي الذاتي إلى دائرة الوعي الأسري، فالخلي، فالقومي، فالإقليمي، فالدولي، فالإنساني، فالعالمي، فالكوني. يقول بن نبي:

¹ بن نبي، فكرة الأفريقية الآسيوية، ص 195.

"إن من الواضح أن الضمير الإنساني في القرن العشرين لم يعد يتكون في إطار الوطن والإقليم، وهذا مع اعترافنا بأن أرض المولد التي يعيش عليها الناس تدمهم بالبواعث الحقيقية لمواقفهم العميقة، غير أن الضمير الإنساني في القرن العشرين إنما يتكون على ضوء الحوادث العالمية التي لا يستطيع أن يتخلص من تبعاتها، فإن مصير أي جماعة إنسانية يتحدد جزء منه خارج حدودها الجغرافية. فالثقافة أصبحت تتحدد أخلاقيا وتاريخيا داخل تخطيط عالمي".¹

إن هذا التخطيط العالمي، وهذا المستوى العالمي، وهذه الدائرة العالمية أصبحت ذات أثر قوي في حركة الوعي الحضاري والثقافي لمختلف المجتمعات والمجتمعات. وما لم يرتفع إنسان هذه الثقافات إلى هذا المستوى العالمي من الوعي والفكر، وما لم يدرك كيف أصبح مفهوم الحضارة العالمية مؤثراً في حياته الخاصة والعامة وفي وجوده الشخصي والثقافي، وفي تكوينه الروحي والعقلي، وفي سلوكه العقدي والفكري؛ فإن هذا الإنسان سيقى دوماً عاجزاً عن إدراك ما يحدث في هذا العالم الجديد من حوله من قضايا وحوادث كبرى. فلا بد إذن من أن يمتد وعي الإنسان ليكون حاضراً في دائرة الثقافة والواقع العالمي، وهو ما يصوره بن نبي بقوله:

"فالمستوى الشخصي لهذا المسلم، حتى ولو نما نمواً نسبياً، يمكن أن يبدو في حالة تضائل، بقدر ما ينمو تطور الآخرين بسرعة أكثر. والواقع أن الوعي الاجتماعي الذي كان يتكون منذ حين في دائرة محدودة، أمام منظر محدّد عموماً، بنطاق بلاد معينة هي الوطن، قد أصبح يتكون اليوم في إطار أكثر امتداداً بدرجة لا تضارع، وفي منظر أكثر انفساحاً كذلك. فكما هي الحال بالنسبة إلى الطفل، ولأسباب نفسها، يحصل امتداد المستوى الشخصي للفرد: امتداد حضوره إلى مدى أبعد من مقره، فوسطه، فبلاده.

¹ بن نبي، مشكلة الثقافة، ص 121.

وهذا التوسع في مستواه الشخصي، يكون مقياساً مباشراً لدرجة تحضر هذا الوسط، حيث لا يحيا الفرد مع أهله ومواطنيه فحسب، ولكن مع عدد أكبر من الأدميين ... فنشاهد على هذا التخطيط بقدر ما يعي فيه الفرد المولود في الدائرة رقم 1 والدائرة رقم 2؛ أعني مشاكل العالم العربي واتجاهاته وآماله، بقدر ما يكتمل وعيه لذاته وينمو مستواه الشخصي، وبقدر ما يتخطى دائرة داخلية إلى أخرى خارجية بقدر ما ينمو عالم أفكاره. وعندما يبلغ وعيه الاكتمال المتطابق مع الدائرة العالمية يكون مستواه الشخصي قد بلغ أقصى اكتماله، بحيث يثبت حضوره في سائر أجزاء المعمورة.¹

إنه من البين أن الواقع العالمي أصبح في حد ذاته واقعاً حيوياً مؤثراً وحاضراً في وجود كل مجتمع وكل ثقافة، بل في وجود كل فرد، بغض النظر عن مدى إدراك المجتمعات والثقافات المختلفة والأفراد لهذا الوجود الجديد، ولهذا الحضور الجديد لقيم الواقع العالمي والثقافة العالمية والوجهة العالمية في التاريخ المعاصر للإنسانية.

وأمام هذا الواقع العالمي الجديد، وهذا الاتجاه التاريخي العام، فإننا في حاجة إلى إعادة النظر في كثير من المسلمات الكبرى التي صاغت وعي الإنسان خلال قرون عديدة، كما علينا أن نعيد النظر فيما كنا نحسبه في الماضي القريب، وفي ظل هيمنة نظرية الدورة الحضارية وفكرة الأفول الحضاري، قوانين صارمة وسنناً مطردة لا تتخلف. ومن القضايا الملحة قضية "الحضارة العالمية" من حيث هي وحدة جديدة لتحليل قضايا الحضارة والتاريخ والاجتماع البشري. وإذا ما تمت لنا عملية بناء مفهوم "الحضارة العالمية" وصياغته إطاراً للتحليل الحضاري، فإن تطبيقاته ستغير كثيراً من فهمنا القديم لقضايا الحضارة ذاتها ولقضايا الثقافة والفكر والوعي والمعرفة والمنهج، وسنضطر إلى إعادة توزيع خريطة العالم وثقافات العالم وفق مقياس آخر مغاير لمقياس المراكز القوية والهوامش المستضعفة.

¹ بن نبي، فكرة كومنولث إسلامي، ترجمة الطيب الشريف (دمشق: دار الفكر، 1990)، ص 67-68.

صحيح أن هذا الطرح للموضوع قد يبدو نظرياً تجرّيدياً في ظل أوضاع العالم الراهنة وفي ظل المشكلات اليومية للبشرية المعاصرة؛ حيث نرى في "المركز" القوى الكبرى مثل أمريكا الشمالية وأوروبا واليابان، ونرى في بعض المناطق التي تعد هوامش النظام الاقتصادي العالمي قوىً ناهضة بسرعة كالصين والهند وبعض دول جنوب شرقي آسيا وغيرها، كما نرى في دوائر أخرى بعض المجتمعات المسحوقة والمنسية حضارياً في آسيا وأفريقيا تزيد أوضاعها سوءاً يوماً بعد يوم. ولكن على الرغم من شخوص هذا الواقع، إلا أننا نرى تبشير واقع علمي جديد ستسود فيه القيم الحضارية العالمية التي ستفكك هذا الواقع، ولتعيد صياغته بصورة معينة يمكن أن نتلمس توجهاتها في التصور الآتي. ففي ظل سيادة فكرة الحضارة العالمية وحدة للتحليل التاريخي والاجتماعي، وفي ضوء رؤية مالك بن نبي، يمكن أن نرى الثقافات الإنسانية اليوم تقف في مفترق الطرق بين ثلاثة خيارات كبرى للتاريخ والحضارة البشرية على النحو الآتي:

1. خيار استمرار الوضع القائم، وضع المحور القوي والمحور الضعيف، المحور المركز والهامش، المركز المتحضر والهامش المتخلف، محور القوة ومحور البقاء، محور الهيمنة ومحور الاستضعاف، محور الاستعمار ومحور القابلية للاستعمار حسب تعبير بن نبي. وهذا هو منطق الصراع والتصادم الحضاري الذي يبشر به بعض كبار المفكرين والسياسيين الغربيين، وهو خيار ممكن وقابل للاستمرار ما استمر نفوذ حملة جراثيمته وبذوره وهم كثير في زماننا.

2. خيار التفاعل والتعايش والتشارك بين القوي والضعيف، وبين المركز والهامش، وبين المتحضر والمتخلف، وبين المهيمن والمستضعف، وبين المستعمر والقابل للاستعمار. وهذا منطق التشارك والتفاعل والتعايش والسلام الذي بشر ويبشر به عدد من كبار العلماء والمفكرين والفلاسفة الروحيين. وفي ضوء ذلك يؤكد بن نبي أن العامل الصناعي الذي كان له أثره في إحداث التفرقة والتمييز بين البشر، حيث أتاح للشعوب المتقدمة المتطورة وضعاً ممتازاً بفضل

تفوقها الاقتصادي والسياسي، هذا العامل نفسه أخذ يتدرج بالإنسانية شيئاً فشيئاً نحو الانسجام والوحدة، محتّماً عليها بذلك مصيراً مشتركاً. وكأنما الحتمية الموحدة التي كان الناس يتصورون عواملها في النطاق الميتافيزيقي، أي وراء العوامل التاريخية، أصبح تأثيرها واضحاً في مجال التاريخ. ومن ثم يقرر أن المشكلة الإنسانية يجب أن ينظر إليها من كلا الوجهين؛ أي من وجهة العوامل الموحدة ومن وجهة العوامل المفرقة.¹

وهذا كذلك خيار ممكن وقابل للنمو. ولكن خيار التفاعل والتعايش هذا يفترض - عند بعضهم - بقاء المركز قوياً والهامش ضعيفاً لكي يستمر واقع التحكم وفرض الشروط، ووضع حدود للتحضر والاستفادة من معطيات الحضارة والخبرة الحضارية الموجودة.

3. خيار التحولات الذاتية لمختلف الحضارات باتجاه القوة والمكنة والاقتدار الحضاري، بحيث يفرض منطق التوازن والاستقرار والسلام والتفاعل والتشارك والتحضر من موقف قوة الجميع وقدرة الجميع، وليس من منطق قوة المراكز وضعف الهوامش وتبعيتها. وهنا يحدث توازن القوى، وتوازن الحضارات وتحددتها في اتجاه الفاعلية الحضارية الشاملة، بحيث تفرض ثقافة الاستقرار والتوازن نفسها بحكم القوة الحضارية للجميع، وبحكم تمكن الجميع وبحكم خطورة التفكير في إلغاء الآخر أو إلحاقه بالمراكز أو بحكم الانكفاء على الذات والعزلة. وعلى الرغم من أن هناك خيارات كثيرة أخرى تترجمها حركات دينية ووضعية واجتماعية وبيئية وغيرها، إلا أن المعطيات الحالية تجعلنا نركز تحليلنا في المعطيات السابقة.

ويبدو الخيار الأخير ضرورياً لتفكيك ثقافة الاستعمار الجديد وثقافة القابلية للاستعمار - حسب مصطلح بن نبي - وثقافة إلغاء الآخر، وثقافة التفرع والهيمنة،

¹ مالك بن نبي، فكرة الإفريقية الآسيوية، ص 70.

وثقافة الاستضعاف والانكفاء والعزلة. وهذا المنطق يقتضي أن تتحمل الحضارات البشرية جميعاً مسؤولياتها وأن تؤدي واجبها إزاء المشكلات الإنسانية الكونية التي تؤثر في مصير الحضارة والإنسان والكون. إن الخيار الثالث هو خيار التحول الحضاري الذاتي لكل الثقافات الإنسانية المتحضرة والسائرة في طريق التحضر والمنعزلة حضارياً في اتجاه الفاعلية الحضارية الذاتية، وفي اتجاه المكنة والاقتدار الحضاري الذاتي ليس فقط لتحضير الذات وبناء الذات الحضارية، وإنما كذلك لبناء الذات الحضارية العالمية التي تبني الثقافة العالمية للإنسانية في عصر العالمية. وهذا هو عصر مسؤولية الإنسان في الأرض أو لحظة الاستخلاف العالمي الشامل في عصر العالمية أين يكون كل إنسان مسؤولاً عن سلامة سفينة الحضارة البشرية. إذا لا يمكن أن تسلم سفينة الحضارة البشرية العالمية إلا بمساهمة الإنسان أينما كان في إنقاذ الحضارة العالمية وسفينتها من الغرق الحضاري الشامل الذي يتحكم فيه الأقوياء في مصير الضعفاء.

مدخل أولي لفهم الحضارة العالمية في ضوء الرسالة الإسلامية

إنه لجدير بنا أن نثبت هنا ذلك الحديث النبوي العظيم الذي يصور وضع سفينة الحضارة الإنسانية في عصر العالمية ويحدد الواجب الذي على الجميع أن يضطلعوا به. قال النبي عليه الصلاة والسلام: «مَثَلُ الْقَائِمِ عَلَى حُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَالْوَأَقِ فِيهَا كَمَثَلِ قَوْمٍ اسْتَهَمُوا عَلَى سَفِينَةٍ، فَأَصَابَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَعْلَاهَا وَأَصَابَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَسْفَلَهَا، فَكَانَ الَّذِينَ فِي أَسْفَلِهَا إِذَا اسْتَقَوْا مِنَ الْمَاءِ مَرُّوا عَلَى مَنْ فَوْقَهُمْ فَقَالُوا: لَوْ أَنَّا خَرَقْنَا فِي نَصِينَا حَرْقاً وَلَمْ نُؤْذِ مَنْ فَوْقَنَا، فَإِنْ يَتْرَكُوهُمْ وَمَا أَرَادُوا هَلَكُوا جَمِيعاً، وَإِنْ أَخَذُوا عَلَى أَيْدِيهِمْ نَجَوْا وَنَجَوْا جَمِيعاً.»¹

¹ الإمام أبو عبد الله محمد بن إسماعيل البخاري، صحيح البخاري (الرياض: دار السلام، 1419/1999)، "كتاب الشركة"، الحديث 2493، ص 403 (عن النعمان بن بشير). وقد رواه كذلك بلفظ مختلف قليلاً كل من الترمذي وأحمد.

إن هذا الحديث يفتح لنا نوراً ساطعاً لفهم واقع البشري في عصر العالمية والشمولية، ويبين لنا بعمق مسألة المجال الجديد لدراسة شؤون البشرية وهي تعيش في سفينة الحضارة العالمية. ولغرض التحليل نقسم الحديث إلى جملة مسائل:

1. قوم تقلهم سفينة واحدة، بعضهم في أعلاها وبعضهم في أسفلها.
2. الذين في أسفل السفينة يصعدون ليستقوا فيؤذوا من هم في أعلاها.
3. الذين في أعلى السفينة يودون منع من هم تحت لتجنب أذاهم.
4. الذين هم في الأسفل يفكرون في حرق السفينة لكي يستقوا.
5. إذا منع من في أسفل السفينة من خرقها نجا جميع من في السفينة، وإذا تركوا وما عزموا على فعله، غرق الجميع وهلكوا.

هذا هو الوضع السائد الآن في صورة رمزية عامة، وهو وضع تحدت فيه مواقع العلو والسفل، مواقع التحضر والتخلف، مواقع القوة والضعف. فالبشرية اليوم تعيش في السفينة الكونية التي تصاغت بصورة عجيبة على المستوى الجغرافي، وأصبحت البشرية فعلاً وكأنها في سفينة صغيرة تقلها في بحر عظيم متلاطم الموج، ثم منطق السجال والصراع والتنازع والعناد بين من هو في أسفلها ومن هو في أعلاها. فكان منطق الأعلى هو منطق المنع للصعود، وكان منطق الأسفل هو منطق النقب والخرق. وكلا المنطقين لا يصلحان، ولا ينفع في علاج معضلة السفينة، والقوم الذين استهموا بها. وقد يكون لهذا المنطق وقع لو أن البشرية مازالت تعيش في واقع إمبراطوري قومي خاص، بحيث يمكن أن يعيش كل مجتمع منعزلاً عن غيره بحدود جغرافية وثقافية معينة. ولكن في ظل واقع العالمية وثقافتها، ومع انحاء الحدود الجغرافية وانزياح حواجز التواصل بين أجزاء المعمورة المختلفة، فإن هذا المنطق ينبغي أن يتغير. فالبشرية اليوم ينبغي أن تسهم كلها في معالجة قضاياها، وينبغي لكل ثقافة أو

حضارة أن تأخذ على عاتقها مسؤولية معالجة المشكلات الإنسانية. والواجب الحضاري العام يحتم على الجميع أن يسهموا في علاج مشكلات الحضارة والبشرية، ذلك أن التطور الفني الكبير الذي شهدته الإنسانية قد وُلد "لكل شعب ضرورات من نوع خاص تفرض على حياته التزامات ومسؤوليات جديدة في نطاق أوسع من نطاقه التاريخي الجغرافي المعتاد".¹ فالحضارة البشرية اليوم أمام خيارين لا ثالث لهما: إما نجاة جماعية هي نتيجة منطقية لموقف للأخذ على الأيدي العابثة وتحمل المسؤولية ومراعاة المصلحة الإنسانية العليا، وإلا ما هلاك جماعي هو نتيجة منطقية لعقلية عدم الاكتراث ووترك الحبل على الغارب لقوى الشر تعبت بمصائر الإنسانية وتسوقها إلى مهاوي الدمار.

ولو أردنا أن نطبق بعض معاني هذا الحديث العظيم على ما نحن بصدد مناقشته من الأفكار لوجدنا أن هذا الحديث يضع فعلاً فلسفة حضارية جديدة للنظر في قضايا السفينة الحضارية البشرية في هذا العصر العالمي الذي نعيش أوضاعه وثقافته بصورة تزيد عمقاً يوماً بعد يوم. فالمقطع الأخير من الحديث يبين لنا المنطق الذي ينبغي أن يحكم وعي البشرية في عصر العالمية الشاملة. ومجال دراسة المشكلات الإنسانية والحضارة البشرية هو مجال "الأخذ على الأيدي" بديلاً للعقلية الحضارية التقليدية التي لا تهمها إلا مصالحها الخاصة، ولا تكثرث غيرها، بل تحاول إلغاء غيرها تبعاً لمنطق الترك. فلم يعد هناك في الحقيقة مجال لعقلية الترك لأنها تؤدي إلى تخطيط السفينة البشرية، وتعطيل الحضارة البشرية من تحقيق رسالتها الاستخلافية كما يرسمها الإسلام كدين إلهي عالمي خاتم. إن هذا الفهم للوضع الحضاري القائم يفرض علينا أن نعيد النظر في فهمنا للحضارة بحسبانها وحدة للتحليل الاجتماعي والتاريخي

¹ مالك بن نبي، تأملات في المجتمع العربي (دمشق: دار الفكر، 1986)، ص 8.

الكلاسيكي، كما ينبغي لنا أن نفكر في مفهوم الحضارة العالمية بوصفها وحدةً أساسية جديدة للتحليل.

وعلى الرغم من أن الواقع الحالي، وطبيعة المشكلات البشرية الحالية، ونوعية التشكيل الحالي للخريطة الحضارية والثقافية والسياسية للعالم لا يترك لنا فرصة للتفكير في تغييره وتحويل الموازين لصالح الخيار الثالث المشار إليه أعلاه ولو على المدى القريب والمتوسط، إلا أننا ينبغي أن نتفاعل على المدى البعيد؛ لأننا نرى تباشير واقع عالمي جديد قد تبرز فيه فلسفة وقيم الخيار الثالث. إن البشرية في ظل التحولات الكبرى التي أخذت حيزها في الخمسين سنة الأخيرة، لا بد لها من إعادة النظر في مفهوم الحضارة، ومنطقها في عصر العالمية، والتحول السريع في مناهج البناء الحضاري وأدواته، وفي طبيعة العلاقات الحضارية والثقافية بين الحضارات المختلفة. فمع المنطق الجديد نجد أن الحضارة الغربية - التي نعتبرها حضارة مركزية مهيمنة الآن - نفسها قد أصبحت جزءاً من التشكيل الحضاري العالمي العام الذي نتحدث عنه. فهي جزء لا يخرج عن تأثيرات المنطق الحضاري العالمي المعاصر الذي تمارسه الحضارة بعد أن أصبحت تمتاز بنوع من الاستقلال عن التأثيرات التي تمارسها القوى التقليدية. ومهما كان من استمرار هيمنة الحضارة الغربية وفعاليتها، إلا أنها تبقى خاضعة للمنطق الحضاري العالمي الذي لا يتشكل فقط في الواقع الغربي، ولكن أصبح ظاهرة عالمية مستقلة نوعياً عن القبضة الصارمة للحضارة الغربية التقليدية؛ وذلك يتجلى "في التطور الذي يدفع الحضارة اليوم إلى الشمول والعالمية، أي إلى حالة سيضطر فيها الأوروبي - الغرب - إلى تقبل واحترام عالم الآخرين حيث تتجدد فيه فكرته عن الإنسان".¹

إن الحضارة اليوم باستقلالها وذاتيتها أصبحت تفلت يوماً بعد يوم من

¹ مالك بن نبي، في مهب المعركة (دمشق: دار الفكر، 1991/1411)، ص 38.

تأثيرات المراكز التقليدية. فذاتية الحضارة وبروز فكرة الحضارة العالمية جاءت نتاجاً مباشراً للتحويلات الكبرى التي حصلت في مختلف مجالات الوعي والمعرفة والثقافة الإنسانية الشاملة. يقول بن نبي:

"ولقد دخلت الإنسانية في عهد عالمية تحت وخز ضرورات هذا التطور، وبفضل الدفع الروحي الذي حظي به العالم على يد رواده الكبار. وبذلك تأيد المنطق العميق الذي قال به عباقرة العالم بمنطق الواقع الغلاب، إذ ربما يصبح العقل الإنساني علم القيمة إذا لم يتوافق مع اطراد الأحداث التي تطبع إرادة الله على صفحات التاريخ، كما يكون آثماً مَنْ يحاول تحريف مجرى التاريخ كأنما هو يعارض إرادة الله."¹

وهذا الواقع الجديد ليس بواقع مفاجئ، ولكنه ضرورة حتمية متوافقة مع منطق التطور التاريخي للحضارة البشرية، ومتساوقة مع منطق التاريخ ذاته، ومتوافقة مع نتائج التطور العلمي والتقني والحضاري الشامل، ومتناسبة مع حجم التحول في الوعي الحضاري البشري، ومنسجمة مع سنن وقوانين ومنطق الواقع العالمي. فليست هذه العالمية خرافة، وليست طموحاً من دون مضمون، وليست فكرة عارضة. ويؤكد ذلك بن نبي بقوله:

"والعالمية في مجراها ليست أطروفة من مفاجآت التاريخ، وليست ابتهاجاً عقلياً أو سياسياً، وإنما هي ظاهرة القرن العشرين، وهي في واقعها المادي نتاج رائع لمقدرة الإنسان، وللمستوى الجديد الذي رفعت إليه هذه المقدرة ألوان نشاطه حتى أصبحت العالمية غريزة القرن العشرين ومعناه... ولقد تجاوز هذا الحضور أولاً الحقل المحلي في القرية ثم في المدينة، ثم وصل بعد ذلك إلى المستوى القومي، ثم امتد شعاعه مع النمو الصناعي فأصبح دولياً، وأخيراً عبر جميع الحدود فأصبح عالمياً... وهذا التصغير للمكان يعد

¹ بن نبي، فكرة الأفريقية الآسيوية، ص 201.

كأنه "تكبير" للإنسان، وامتدادٌ ورحابة في نطاقه الشخصي؛ إذ في هذا المستوى يصبح العالم وطنه، وميدانه المحدود ومجاله الحيوي العادي".¹

ذلك أن عهد العلمية، كما يقرر بن نبي مؤيداً ما ذهب إليه طائفة من علماء الطبيعة والفيزياء والفلاسفة والمفكرين الروحيين، "قد حان مع العهد الذري، أي مع نتائج النمو الصناعي، ومع الفتوحات العلمية التي أتاحت لطاقة الإنسان أن تسيطر سيطرةً تامة على الكرة الأرضية"، ومن ثم وجد الناس أنفسهم أمام واقع جديد هو واقع العالمية (mondialisme)، التي يرى أنها ليست مجرد فكرة تجريدية، "أو مجرد رغبة، أو خيلاً، أو مبدأً أخلاقياً، بل إنها تصريح لعصرنا وغاية محتومة لتطورنا الراهن، وضرورة تفرضها الظروف الصناعية والنفسية التي بلغها العالم".²

فالحضارة اليوم ليست قضية غربية، ولا قضية آسيوية، ولا هي قضية أفريقية، إنها قضية إنسانية عالمية عامة. فلو طلب منا أن نعرف الحضارة اليوم، فإننا سنحاول أن نذكر مختلف التعريفات الاجتماعية والثقافية والإنسانية العامة التي نجدها عند المتخصصين في العلوم الاجتماعية والإنسانية والفلاسفة وغيرهم. وعلى الرغم من ضرورة هذه التعاريف وأهميتها، إلا أنه ينبغي أن نضيف مجالاً أو مستوى آخر من مستويات النظر في مفهوم الحضارة ودلالاتها. فإذا كنا في الإطار التحليلي الذي صاغته التجربة الغربية نربط تعريف الحضارة دائماً بالواقع الغربي، وبالتطور التاريخي والثقافي للخبرة والضمير الغربيين، وبالرؤية الكونية الغربية، والإستراتيجية العامة للمشروع الحضاري الغربي، إذا كنا قد درجنا على ذلك سابقاً، فإننا في ظل المنطق العالمي المعاصر بحاجة إلى توسيع مجالنا الدلالي وإطارنا التحليلي، لكي نتحرك بمفهوم الحضارة من مجرد كون الحضارة وحدة للتحليل إلى أفق نظام الحضارة

¹ المصدر نفسه، ص 201-206.

² المصدر نفسه، ص 199.

العالمية باعتبارها وحدة جديدة للتحليل. وبالتالي فإن أفقنا الدلالي سيتسع بشكل عميق ومتعدد الزوايا نرى فيه تشكيل الحضارة العالمية في تعقيدها وتنوعها. ففي ظل التصور الغربي للحضارة، وفي ظل الفلسفة الغربية للحضارة قد وصلنا إلى بعض النهايات المأساوية على مستوى فهم الحضارة ودلالاتها وآفاقها.

إن الإطار التحليلي والتنظيري الغربي قد انتهى إلى خلاصات "مأزقية" وطرق مسدودة، لخصت في جملة من "النهايات"، مثل "نهاية التاريخ"، و"نهاية العقل"، و"نهاية الإنسان" و"نهاية الاقتصاد" و"نهاية الدولة"، و"نهاية المعرفة"، و"نهاية الرؤية الكونية"... إلخ. فهذه النهايات تعبر عن الإشكالات الكبرى في الوعي الحضاري الغربي، وأن النسق الغربي الحضاري الذي ما زال يحن إلى منطق الدورة، وإلغاء الآخر، وتكريس الوضع القائم للمركز والهوامش. ويعتبر هذا الفهم للمسار التاريخي للوعي وللحضارة إشكالية خطيرة جدا على مستوى فهم مستقبل الحضارة، ومستقبل العلاقات الدولية ومستقبل الحوار الثقافي والديني، ومستقبل الاقتصاد الدولي، ومستقبل المعرفة، ومستقبل التربية والتعليم، ومستقبل الإنسان عامة في ظل فكرة الحضارة العالمية.

إننا ما لم نفصل بين التصور الغربي للحضارة والتصور الإنساني الحضاري العالمي العام لها، فستبقى مناهجنا ورؤانا وأدواتنا التحليلية أسيرة للنموذج الحضاري الغربي القائم على منطق النهايات والمآزق. ولذلك فإن اقتراح مستوى تحليلي جديد للنظر في ظاهرة الحضارة أمر حيوي وضروري. وليس هذا الأمر من قبيل تخطيط الرؤية الغربية للحضارة بصورة مطلقة أو الدعوة إلى إلغاء كل مفهوم غربي للحضارة، ولكن يأتي هذا الاقتراح في سياق محاولة توجيه المفهوم الغربي، والمنطق الحضاري الغربي ليكتشف أزمته الحادة والخطيرة التي أصبحت تكبد البشرية كلها أضرارا جسيمة على كل المستويات. ففي

منظور التحليل الحضاري المقترح تصبح مناهج التحليل الغربي، والرؤى الفكرية الغربية مجرد آراء وإسهامات في التشكيل الحضاري العالمي للإنسانية، وليست هي المركز والمحور والموجه والمهيمن على مختلف أنساق الوعي. فبقاء هذا الوضع المؤكد لمركزية النسق الغربي وهيمته في مناهج التحليل الحضاري وخاصة في ظل قيم الحضارة العالمية سيجعل أفق الدراسات الحضارية أفقاً محدوداً جداً، ومتبعاً لمنطق خاص مفروض بقوة القدرة والسلطان والمكنة الحضارية الغربية. فعلى أساس المستوى التحليلي المقترح الذي يأخذ بعين الاعتبار مفهوم الحضارة العالمية كوحدة لتحليل التاريخ والحضارة والاجتماع البشري نكون في وضع بالصورة الآتية:

1. مجال التحليل الحضاري الغربي، وهو مجال متنوع ومتعدد في عناصره البشرية وبنائه الثقافي وتكوينه الروحي والديني وتطوره التاريخي، ويشمل فضلاً عن أوروبا وأمريكا الشمالية أستراليا ووزيلندا الجديدة، وله خصوصياته وذاتيته ومنطقه ومستويات معقولته من جهة، وهو يتوفر على إطار تحليلي بإمكانه أن يقدم ما يصلح للآخرين وينفعهم ويمكن - إن صدقت النية - أن يتفاعل حضارياً مع النماذج والأنساق الحضارية الأخرى بصورة مخرصة من جهة ثانية.

2. مجال التحليل الحضاري الآسيوي، وهو كذلك مجال متنوع ومتعدد في تكوينه البشري والثقافي والتاريخي، وله خصوصياته وذاتيته ومنطقته ومستويات معقولته، وهو يقدم كذلك إطاراً تحليلياً قد يسمح بتداول بعض أطروحاته، وقيمه الكبرى في نطاق إنساني مشترك مع الآخرين، وخاصة إذا أخذنا في الاعتبار مخزونه الروحي الهندوسي-البوذي-الكنفوشيوسي.

3. مجال التحليل الحضاري الإفريقي، وهو كذلك مجال متنوع يتضمن الواقع والإنسان الأفريقي بكل تشكيلاته الاجتماعية والثقافية ومستويات وعيه الفكري التي تمتاز كذلك بخصوصيتها ومنطقها وتفرد ذاتيتها. كما أن لهذا

المجال ما يمكن أن يقدمه للبشرية في مجال القيم والرؤى الإنسانية التي يمكن أن تتداول عالميا وبصورة مشتركة بين مختلف التشكيلات الحضارية.

4. مجال التحليل الحضاري العربي الإسلامي، وهو مجال حضاري حيوي واسع ومتعدد الثقافات، يشمل العالم العربي والعالم البنغالي والعالم الفارسي والعالم الملايوي وغيرها، ويتقاطع مع العالم الأفريقي والعالم الأروبي وغيرهما. ويتميز هذا المجال التحليلي الحضاري بخصوصيته وفرداته وكيونته ومنطقه وذاتيته ونسقه ونموذجه الحضاري وراثته الثقافي وغناه الفكري، فضلاً معينه الروحي والخلقي، فضلاً عن كونه يشتمل على مجال دلالي عالمي مشترك يتواصل مع قارات العالم وشعوبه وثقافته اجتماعياً وبشرياً وتاريخياً، ومن ثم يمكن لهذا المجال أن يتواصل مع العالم وثقافته ويتفاعل معها بمنطق انفتاحه الذاتي ومن منطلق قيمه العالمية وأصوله العقدية.

إن هذه المجالات التحليلية الحضارية تضع التصور الغربي والمنطق الحضاري الغربي أمام إشكالية جوهرية. فالنسق الحضاري الغربي الذي يبحث عن المركزية والهيمنة والسيطرة يحاول - عند الكثير من رواده - في حقيقة الأمر نفي وإلغاء مختلف هذه المجالات التحليلية الحضارية بمنطق القوة والقدرة والسلطان والمصلحة الغربية العليا. إلا أن هذا المنطق الذي حكم العالم لمدة طويلة بدأ يتفكك مع الضربات الجديدة الموجهة للمنطق الحضاري الجديد، أعني منطق الحضارة العالمية. فالمنطق الحضاري الغربي يميز بين الثقافات والحضارات والمجتمعات من منطلق أن الحضارة الغربية هي التي ينبغي أن تهيمن، فمعها انتهى التاريخ، وانتهى الإنسان، وانتهى الاقتصاد، وانتهت المعرفة، وانتهت الحضارة، وأصبح الغرب هو الحضارة ذاتها وهو القانون العام والناموس الكوني ذاته الذي يُراد له أن يحكم مصائر البشرية. ولكن هذا المنطق بات مأساوياً، وأصبح عاجزاً عن معالجة القضايا الحضارية الإنسانية العالمية الكبرى وحده بمنطق القوة والهيمنة؛ ذلك لأن هذا المنطق بدأ يفقد

مسوغاته، إن لم نقل إنه فقدتها نظرياً وهو يفقدها عملياً يوماً بعد يوم، وأهم مظهر لذلك الرفض الاعتراضات المتعددة التي تصدر من الدول والمجتمعات والأفراد والجمعيات إزاء السياسات الغربية في مختلف القضايا ذات الشأن العالمي.

خاتمة

إن العرض السابق لمفهوم مالك بن نبي للحضارة العالمية بوصفها وحدة للتحليل التاريخي والثقافي والاجتماعي يقودنا إلى جملة من الخلاصات التي توصل إليها بن نبي من خلال نظره في مسيرة الإنسانية واستشرافه لمصائرهما في أوائل النصف الثاني من القرن العشرين، وهي من دون شك تنطبق على أوضاع الإنسانية وقد ولجت العقد الثاني من القرن الحادي والعشرين. ويمكن سرد تلك الخلاصات في الأمور الآتية:¹

1. إن الأوضاع الانفجارية التي شهدتها العالم وعاشت شعوبه ويلاتهما خلال الحربين العالميتين وما سبقها وصحبها ولحقها من وقائع وآثار في الفكر والحياة، قد حتمت ردّ مشكلة الحضارة إلى المستوى العالمي.

2. إن تكامل النوع الإنساني وخلصه وسلامه قد أصبحا أهم ما يهتم نفسية القرن العشرين واجتماعه.

3. إن مهمة الإنسانية ومستقبلها قد أصبحا خاضعين لقضية السلام، التي تفرض نفسها مقدمةً لكل مشروع اجتماعي روحي في العالم الراهن، بحيث أصبحت مشكلة السلام في العالم هي النقطة التي تلتقي عندها خيوط التاريخ جميعاً.

4. إن أية ثقافة حضارية تقدم نفسها لقيادة العالم ينبغي أن تعطي فكرة السلام مكانتها وأبعادها الحقيقية بأن تضمن نجاحها ونجاحتها على مستوى المبادئ العليا الحاكمة للفاعل الإنساني الحضاري.

5. إن حالة التفكك التي تعرض لها العالم بفعل الوقائع والتطورات التي

¹ انظر في ذلك: بن نبي، فكرة الإفريقية الآسيوية، ص 49، 126-127، 200؛ مشكلة الثقافة، ص 116-128.

شهدتها تاريخ الإنسانية خلال القرنين التاسع عشر والعشرين يهدف إلى إعادة تجميعه وتركيبه بعناصر جديدة صالحة للسير به من حالة التجزئة والتمييز إلى حالة التجمع والعالمية.

6. إن بناء عقلية عالمية جديدة لعلاج المشكلة الإنسانية لا يمكن ولا يصح أن يتصور من الزاويتين الاقتصادية والسياسية فقط، بل لا بد أن يكون المدخل إلى ذلك من سائر الزوايا مع تقديم العنصر النفسي الذي يوفر نوعاً من القاسم المشترك في جميع المشكلات التي تثور بين الشعوب.

7. إن المثقف المسلم ملزم بأن ينظر إلى الأشياء من زاويتها الإنسانية الرحبة، لكي يدرك مهمته الخاصة ومهمة ثقافته في الإطار العالمي لما يواجه الإنسانية من تحديات.

إن مرحلة العالمية التي يرى بن نبي أن الإنسانية مقبلة عليها بفعل منطق التاريخ، والتي ينبغي عليها أن تلحها بعقل وروح جديدين، وأن تسير إليها وفيها تحت لواء قيادة متوازنة ورشيدة سيكون للإسلام في تشكيلها مهمة عظيمة وأثر بعيد، يشرحهما بن نبي بناءً على الوضع الخاص الذي يحتله الإسلام في العالم فيقول:

"وبسبب هذا الوضع الخاص يتمتع الإسلام بوضع القاسم المشترك مع جميع الثقافات التي تؤلف الخريطة الروحية في العالم. فهو في مركزه في البحر الأبيض المتوسط يقع في قلب عالم الكتاب المقدس، الذي يتقاسم معه رسالة إبراهيم. وهو في مراكزه الآسيوية يقع في قلب عالم البهاجفادجيتا وفكرة بوذا وحكمة كونفوشيوس. وهو في افريقيا الوسطى على صلات مع النفس الإنسانية العذراء المنزهة عن أي طابع تعليمي في كامل براءتها البدائية."¹

¹ مالك بن نبي، فكرة الافريقية الآسيوية، ص221.

ومن ثم فإن المسلم هو الشاهد العدل الذي عليه أن ينهض بمهمة قيادة الإنسانية في مسيرتها إلى طور الحضارة العالمية، وذلك بحكم موقعه في خريطة العالم وسطاً تتواصل عبره وتتواشج شعوب الأرض على المستويات الإنسانية والروحية والثقافية والجغرافية كافة.

CHAPTER 7

من قيم العالمية إلى قيم العولمة

محمد بن نصر

مقدمة

يزعم الكاتب في هذه الدراسة – ومن حقه أن يزعم طالما أنه يريد أن يناقش افتراضاً يبدو في ظاهره عصي الهضم، ولكنه يبقى في النهاية رؤية محتملة قابلة للتفاعل مع الرؤى الأخرى لكيفية التعامل مع العولمة – أنَّ التعامل مع العولمة بوصفها الطور الأخير من تطور الحضارة الغربية سيكون أيسرَ من التعامل مع العالمية¹ بوصفها المرحلة التي عرفتتها الليبرالية الرأسمالية قبل بلوغها طور العولمة، وذلك لأن العولمة على الرغم من ضخامة الوسائل التقنية التي تستخدمها في بسط نفوذها في العالم بوصفها حركة طاغية كاسحة، إلا أنها حركة بدون روح، فاقدة لعناصر الجذب والفعالية التي كانت متوفرة في العالمية.

تكمن الأهمية القصوى لأية ظاهرة من الظواهر الإنسانية في مآلاتها، وتحديدًا في القيم التي تنبثق عنها؛ لأنَّ القيم هي التي توجه سلوك الأفراد في حياتهم الخاصة وفي علاقاتهم الاجتماعية، وكما أنها تحدد تصورهم للقضايا الكبرى المرتبطة بوجود الإنسان ومصيره. وانطلاقاً من هذه الفرضية تحاول هذه الدراسة أن تنظر في القيم التي

¹ الثقافة العالمية، ثقافة نامية ومتفوقة، سمت إلى المستوى العالمي مع احتفاظها بصفاتها الذاتية وهويتها الخاصة، ولأنَّ الآخرين أشادوا بها، فأصبحت عالمية. فصفة العالمية استحقاق تحصل عليه ثقافة ما من الآخرين، أمَّا العولمة فصفة تطلقها حضارة على نفسها وتفرضها على الآخرين.

رسخت في عصر العولمة، وبيان أثرها في تكوين شخصية "المواطن العالمي". لم يعد السؤال حول طبيعة العولمة، وما إذا كانت حركة موضوعية لا مناص من الانخراط فيها، أم حركة ذاتية يمكن فهم منطلقها الداخلي، وآليات بسط نفوذها، ومن ثمّ الوقوف ضدها أو التعامل معها وفق معايير معينة. لم يعد هذا السؤال ذا جدوى، فالعولمة أصبحت أمراً واقعاً، وهي بطبيعتها ليست وضعاً ثابتاً، بل في حالة اكتمال مستمرة على الأقل من حيث الوسائل المستخدمة.

ولئن تعددت تعريفات العولمة وتنوعت، إلا أن هناك اتفاقاً على أنّ العولمة في جوهرها تجسيد لإرادة القوى الكبرى، أو بالأحرى للقوة الأكبر التي تسعى إلى تحويل العالم إلى مجتمع كوني واحد، تحكمه القوانين نفسها وتوجهه القيم نفسها، وذلك من خلال التحكم في الاتصال: وسائل ومضامين، والتحكم في الاقتصاد: إنتاجاً وتسويقاً، والتحكم في التقنية: تصميماً وإنتاجاً. لم يعد إذاً من الممكن أن تختار أمة من الأمم الانخراط أو عدم الانخراط فيها. إنّ مطالبة شعب أو أمة بالقطيعة مع العولمة أشبه ما تكون بحالة شخص أُلقي به في اليمّ، ثمّ طُوب بألا يتبل بالماء.

وعليه فالسؤال الأكثر إلحاحاً هو: كيف نفك هذا الوثاق ونحرر الإنسان المسلم حتى يكون قادراً على السباحة في بحر العولمة، والاستفادة من الإمكانيات التي توفرها؟

سنحاول في هذه الدراسة ومن خلال موضوع القيم الإجابة عن هذا السؤال، ونحسب أنّ لهذا الخيار ما يسوغه. فحضارة ما لا تحل محل حضارة أخرى اتفاقاً، وإنما أخذاً بالأسباب الموضوعية. ومن بين هذه الأسباب معرفة الحلقات الأضعف في الحضارة المهيمنة، ومن ثمّ الانطلاق منها لتصحيح مسارها.

لا جدال في أنّ النظام العالمي الغربي بزعامة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية قد تفوق منذ زمن بعيد في المجالات العلمية والتقنية والاقتصادية، وعليه فإن المنافسة في هذه المجالات تبدو غير ممكنة على الأقل في المدى القريب. ولكن التفوق

المادي ليس من الضروري أن يصاحبه تفوق في القيم، فقد يحصل تقابل وتناسب عكسي بين الأمرين، فيصاحب التفوق في الوسائل تردُّ في القيم. هذه المسألة تحتاج إلى شيء من التفكير لمعرفة ماهية القيم التي أفرزتها العولمة، ومعرفة الفرق بينها وبين قيم العالمية، وذلك من خلال جملة من الأسئلة الرئيسة الآتية:

ما الإضافة التي يمكن أن يقدمها المسلمون في هذا المجال؟ ما الشرط الذي يجب توفره؟ هل يمكن أن نرشد الاتصال بالتواصل، والتنافس بين الأفراد والجماعات بالتعاون والصراع مع الطبيعة بفكرة التسخير الإلهي؟ هل نستطيع أن نجعل الخلاص الفردي رهين الخلاص الجماعي؟

إنَّ هذه المسائل في غاية الأهمية بالنسبة للمسلمين؛ لأنَّ كيفية التعامل معها هي التي ستحدد ما إذا كان من الممكن استعادة شهودهم الحضاري أم لا، وهي أيضاً ستبين مدى قدرتهم على ترشيد المكاسب التي حققتها الإنسانية والبناء عليها.

العولمة وريثة العالمية ولكن...

حاول كثير من المفكرين الغربيين وغير الغربيين أن يقدموا قيم الحضارة الغربية¹ على أنها قيم عالمية منفتحة، الأمر الذي يجعلها قادرة على تجاوز الإطار الفكري والثقافي لنشأتها وقابلةً لاستيعاب وتحويل الحضارات الأخرى وإعطائها أبعاداً إنسانية بعد صهرها في الرؤية الكلية والتصورات العامة للحضارة الغربية؛ وذلك لأنها في زعمهم قيم ناتجة عن حركة

¹ يرى إبراهيم أبو ربيع في دراسة له بعنوان "العولمة: هل من ردٍّ إسلامي معاصر؟" أن التحدي الأساسي الذي فرضه الغرب على العقل العربي الإسلامي في العصر الحديث هو الذي أرغم الفكر الإسلامي الحديث من خلال على نقد الماضي ومحاولة انتحال روح الغرب العلمية الحديثة، وأنه مع ذلك بقي الغرب مصطلحاً غير محدد في الفكر الإسلامي الحديث: هل يمثل الاستعمار؟ أم الليبرالية؟ أم المسيحية؟ أم الرأسمالية؟ أم الاشتراكية؟ وكان الغرب باعتباره كياناً علمياً وثقافياً اجتماعياً باستمرار بالنسبة للعقل المسلم هجوماً عدوانياً. (مجلة إسلامية المعرفة، العدد 21، صيف 2000). ونحن نرى أنَّ عدم تحديد مصطلح الغرب ناتج عن عدم التمييز بين التحديث والتغريب.

العقل الحرّ والمستنير، ذلك العقل الذي جعل من نفسه حكماً على كل أنماط السلوك البشري وفي كل المجالات، ونصب نفسه موجهاً لفعل الإنسان بعد أن كان موجهاً من الدّين، وقبله كان يقوم بهذه المهمة السحر والأساطير. رُسمت لكل مجالات المعرفة "طرق ملكية" على غرار الطريق الملكي الذي انتهجه العلم، وكاد يستقر في الأذهان أنه من الممكن التحكم في الإنسان مثلما يمكن التحكم في الطبيعة انطلاقاً من فهم القوانين التي تسيّرّها، واستثمار الإمكانيات التي توفرّها.

وبما أنّ سلوك الإنسان لا يمكن ضبطه كما تضبط حركة الأشياء المادية، فقد حدثت جملة من التحولات الكبرى في العالم كان من الصعب أن نجد لها مسوغات عقلية، وقد كان من أبرزها ظاهرة الاستعمار (ومصطلح الاستعمار بوصفه ظاهرة تاريخية يعبر عن المعنى الأصلي لهذه اللفظة في سياقها الدلالي في اللغة العربية)، وكانت الحربان العالميتان الأولى والثانية، وانقسم العالم إلى مستعمرين ومستعمرين، وتحولت نظرية السلم والسلام العالمي إلى سعي مجنون لتطوير أسلحة الدمار الشامل. وقد أدت هذه التحولات إلى سقوط العقل من عرشه، وأصبح هو نفسه أداة من أدوات الصراع الإيديولوجي. لقد كان من غير المنطقي أن نتظر من حضارة قامت أساساً على نظرية الاصطفاء والبقاء للأقوى أن تكون عقلانية في نظرتها، ولم يكن أمام الذي عجز عن المنافسة إلّا الانسحاب المؤدي إلى الانقراض الكلي، شأنه في ذلك شأن تلك الأنواع من الحيوانات التي انقرضت بسبب عجزها عن التكيف مع الظروف البيئية المتغيرة.

وبعد حقبة الحرب الباردة بين القوتين العظميتين (الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية والاتحاد السوفيتي)، انزاح الستار الشيوعي عن يؤس اجتماعي وفكري ليفتح الباب على مصراعيه أمام أيديولوجية اقتصاد السوق الموحد والقيم المادية الليبرالية الغربية، الساعية إلى أن تكون قيماً للإنسانية قاطبة، وبدأت أو بالأحرى استؤنفت المعركة الثقافية ضد بعد

كانت أن هدأت إبان الحرب الباردة؛ لأنّ الثقافة هي المُعبّر الحقيقي والأصيل عن الخصوصية الحضارية لأية أمة من الأمم، وعن تصور هذه الأمة للكون والإنسان والحياة، وعن الفعل الإنساني ومآلاته، وهي المحسدة للقيم الأساسية التي يتقوم بها ذلك الفعل. لقد سبق لبعض المفكرين، وخاصة في مجال العلوم الاجتماعية إبان العهد الاستعماري، أن عملوا على فهم المنطق الداخلي للثقافات الأخرى بغية الوصول إلى فهم "نواة كل ثقافة"؛ ذلك أنّ تحديد النواة الثقافية يجعل تفتيت هذه الثقافة والسيطرة عليها أمراً ممكناً. واستمرت المحاولات، ولكن هذه المرة تمّ استخدام وسائل وأدوات محلية، حيث قامت النخب الثقافية المحلية بأداء مهمة الوسيط الثقافي مكتملاً بذلك دور الوسيط السياسي والاقتصادي. ولكن الشعوب التي عانت الولايات من الاستعمار ومن حكومات الاستقلال عادت بقوة للتحصن بهويتها الثقافية بأشكال مختلفة ومتنوعة.

لقد أحرقت استراتيجية تفتيت الثقافات المحلية من الداخل، وبرزت أشكال التمييز العنصري وسياسات النهب المنظم لخيرات دول الجنوب وثرواتها. وفي ظلّ هذا الانهيار الكامل للأنساق الإيديولوجية ظهرت العولمة، وحولت المواجهة مع الثقافات الأخرى إلى مواجهة عمودية، فاخرقت بذلك الحدود والحواجر، ولم تعد في حاجة إلى "الوسيط"، مستثمرة في ذلك وسائل الاتصال ذات التقنية العالية. وبالرغم من أنّ العولمة وريث طبيعي للعالمية الغربية التي تشكلت في عهد الاستعمار المباشر، وبالرغم مما يبدو من تشابه ظاهري في القيم السائدة، فإننا نزعّم أنّ الاختلاف نوعي بين قيم العالمية وقيم العولمة. ولذلك سنعمد أولاً إلى فك الارتباط بين مفهومي العالمية والعولمة وتمييز حدود كل منهما.

العالمية والعولمة

سعت العالمية إلى تغيير العالم، ولكن بقدر من الانفتاح على الثقافات الأخرى، والتركيز على ما يبدو متوافق مع قيم العالمية على أمل الارتقاء بالخصوصية الثقافية

إلى مستوى الثقافة العالمية. أمّا العولمة فإنّها تريد محو هذه الخصوصيات الثقافية، وبالتحديد تلك الخصوصيات التي تساعد على الصمود والمواجهة. أمّا الجوانب الثقافية التي لا تتجاوز أن تكون نوعاً من الفلكور الذي يجذب فضول السيّاح؛ فإنه يجرى الإبقاء عليها وتشجيعها.

تهدف العالمية إلى تكوين وعي عام يكون معبراً عن قناعات الأفراد والجماعات، ولذلك أكدت أهمية الفرد الحر الذي يتوقع منه أن يختار عن دراية وطوعية - أو على الأقل يتصور أنّ الأمر كذلك - الاتساق الجزئي أو الكلي مع قيمها. أمّا العولمة فلا يهتمها إذا كان الفرد مقتنعاً باختياره أم لا، بل إنّه من الأفضل أن يفقد الأفراد ملكة التفكير أصلاً حتى يسيروا بلا توقف، ولا يهم إن كان لحياقتهم قصد أم كان سعيهم على غير هدى، تتخاطفهم الصور وتتجاذبهم الأهواء. وإذا عن هؤلاء الأفراد أن يتوقفوا ليفكروا وليتأملوا ويبحثوا لوجودهم وفعلهم عن معنى، فإنهم يفقدون القدرة على الحركة، وسرعان ما يجدون أنفسهم مُزاحين عن الطريق ليحل محلهم آخرون أكثر استجابة وأكثر اندفاعاً. وإذا واصلوا السير، فقدوا نقطة الارتكاز، وغابت عنهم وجهة المسير، وتلاشت أمامهم نقطة المرمى، فيصبحون بذلك تائهين وسط حركة لولبيّة خالية عن كل معنى إلّا ما يتعلق بإشباع الرغبات الذاتية التي لا حدّ لها، فيزجّ بهم في فضاء اللامعنى قبل أن يدخلوا فضاء الحداثة. وهكذا كان عماد العالمية الترويج، وأصبح عماد العولمة الترهيب.

قيم العالمية

يجب التنبيه أولاً إلى أنّ إبرازنا لقيم العالمية بوصفها قيماً إيجابية وفعالة لا يعني أنّ الحضارة الغربية (مع ضرورة التفريق هنا بين مفهوم الحداثة الذي ساد في مرحلة العالمية ومفهوم التغريب الذي ساد في مرحلة العولمة) لم تكن حضارة تُهب

متواصل لخبرات الشعوب، ولا يعني أيضاً أننا نتعمد السكوت عن الدمار الشامل الذي تسببت فيه. فهناك محطات بينة وبارزة للعيان من إبادة مبرجة للسكان الأصليين، وقمع متواصل للشعوب المطالبة بحريتها، فضلاً عن ملايين الضحايا في حربين عالميتين سجلتا سبقاً تاريخياً في الدمار الشامل. ولكننا نصفها بالإيجابية؛ لأنها كانت سبباً (إلى جانب أسباب أخرى) في استنهاض الهمم والدعوة إلى التحرر وتقرير المصير، وذلك لأنها تمتلك عدداً من عناصر الجذب والإثارة نذكر منها الآتي:

1. إنها حضارة العقل: ذلك العقل الذي سعى إلى تنظيم الفعل الإنساني وترشيده في إطار فهمه لقوانين الطبيعة وتقلبات النفس الإنسانية، وذلك من أجل التحكم فيها وضبط أهداف محددة يريد الوصول إليها ضمن هذه المعادلات. وفضلاً عن قدرته على التفكير والفهم والتنظيم والتخطيط، أتقن هذا العقل أيضاً فنَّ النقد الذاتي والقدرة على المراجعة والتصحيح. إلا أن مشكلة هذا العقل تكمن في أنه جعل من شروط تحرره وانطلاقه وإبداعه الانفصال عن المصادر الأخرى التي اعتبرت لا معقولة من دين ومعارف غيبية، فتحوّلت منهجية التعقل إلى قيد يمنع العقل من استشراف مجالات لا يطالها الحسّ. لم تكن قيمة أعمال العقل إبداعاً صرفاً للحضارة الغربية، فلقد سبقتها إلى ذلك حضارات عديدة، ولكن الحضارة الغربية، وسّعت من مجال استخدامه واستثمرته في كل المجالات وبدون حدود.

كان العقل قبل الحضارة الغربية يسأل ويجيب، ولكنه كان يعترف بعجزه عن الإجابة عن كل الأسئلة التي يثيرها. أمّا عقل الحضارة الغربية، فإنه جعل قدرته على السؤال مساوية لقدرته على الإجابة،¹ وهذا تبوأ العقل موقع الصدارة وأصبح سيد

¹ يرى عبد الوهاب المسيري أنّ العقل الغربي أصبح عقلاً أداتياً قائماً على أداء وظيفة الاستجابة لنداءات الطبيعة والغريزة، وتبريرها بما في ذلك نداء الهيمنة من حرب وعنّف وإبادة ضدّ الشعوب الأخرى، واستبعاد القيم النفسية

نفسه، فضلاً عن سيادته على الأشياء. وتزامن ذلك مع سيادة التقليد والاتباع والانصياع للخرافات في المجتمعات الإسلامية وغيرها من المجتمعات، فكان لهذه القيمة صدى إيجابياً فتقبلها المسلمون قبولاً حسناً على الأقل من حيث المبدأ.

وقد تباين النظائر في تحديد مجالاته، واشتد اللفظ حول علاقته بالوحي، فجعله بعضهم رديفاً، ووسّع بعضهم الآخر الدائرة حتى أصبح العقل هو الحكم وهو المهيم، ومنهم من ضيقها فلم يُسلم له إلا بتفسير النصوص الدينية وتوضيح مضامينها، وآخرون ابتغوا بين ذلك سبيلاً. وبغض النظر عن المنزلة التي أعطاه العقل لنفسه أو أُعطيت له، فلقد كان ذلك حافزاً ودافعاً لإثارة جملة من الأسئلة المتعلقة بإصلاح المجتمعات الإسلامية ونهضتها. لقد كانت رحلة العقل في الفضاء الإسلامي المعاصر رحلة عسيرة وشاقة؛ فكلما حاول أن يعود إلى التراث ليستلهم منه شروط النهضة ويعيد ترتيب الأولويات وفق أهداف معينة، تاه في دروبه وعجز عن "تخليص الإبريز من الإرث النفيس"، كما عجز قبل ذلك عن "تخليص الإبريز في معرفة أحوال باريس".

2. **إنّها حضارة الإنسان:** العقلانية من حيث إنها قيمة تسعى إلى فهم قوانين الطبيعة وفهم الظواهر الإنسانية أعطت الإنسان موقعاً مركزياً، فأصبح صانعاً لأفعاله، ومسؤولاً عن الواقع الذي يعيشه، وبالتالي مسؤولاً عن تغييره وتحويله إلى ما هو أفضل. هذا الإيمان الراسخ بالقدرة على التغيير والإصلاح من القيم الإنسانية التي قامت عليها الحداثة، وأصبحت بذلك مشروعاً مفتوحاً في حالة اكتمال مستمرة تنصهر فيه عصارة الفكر البشري.

وعودة الإنسان إلى مركزه المفقود في الحضارة الغربية تزامنت مع فقدان متدرج

والروحانية التي عجز عن تفسيرها هذا العقل المبرمج طبيعياً ووظيفياً على الأداء. انظر: تقدم عبد الوهاب المسيري لكتاب: إشكالية التحيز (فريجينا/القاهرة: المعهد العالمي للفكر الإسلامي، 1995).

لهذا المركز في العالم الإسلامي الذي ساد فيه الاعتقاد بأن ثمة حتمية كونية تفرض نفسها على الجميع، إنها حتمية التدهور المستمر، من التوحيد، إلى الفجور، إلى الكفر. فالتاريخ يتجه منحدرًا من الأحسن إلى الأسوأ، فبقدر ما يبتعد الإنسان المسلم زمنيًا عن العصر الذهبي الإسلامي تزداد وتيرة سقوطه. ومنذ وقت مبكر ومنذ أن تمّ وأد الإنسان المعتزلي بفعله وبفعل الآخرين، رسخت شيئًا فشيئًا فكرة التقدم نحو الأسوأ. كتب أبو بكر الطرطوشي (ت 520هـ):

"فأما اليوم فقد ذهب صفو الزمان وبقي كدره، فالموت اليوم تحفة لكل مسلم؛ لأنّ الخير أصبح خاملًا، والشر أصبح ناضرًا، وكأنّ الغي أصبح ضاحكًا والرشد باكيًا، وكأنّ العدل أصبح غائرًا وأصبح الجور غالبًا، وكأنّ الغفل أصبح مدفوعًا والجهل منشورًا، وكأنّ اللؤم أصبح باسقًا والكرم خاويًا، وكأنّ الودّ أصبح مقطوعًا والبغضاء موصولة، وكأنّ الكرامة قد سلبت من الصالحين، وتوحي بها الأشرار، وكأنّ الحبّ أصبح مستيقظًا والوفاء نادمًا، وكأنّ الكذب أصبح مثمرًا والصدق مايلاً، وكأنّ الأشرار أصبحوا يسامون السماء، وأصبح الأخيار يردون بطن الأرض."¹

إنها لوحة في غاية السواد هذه التي يرسمها الطرطوشي؛ لم تعد الأمة تتقدم فقط نحو الأسوء، بل إنّ الأسوء أطبق عليها من كل جانب حتى صار الموت "تحفة لكل مسلم"! وبالرغم من محاولات اليقظة وإعادة الفاعلية للإنسان حتى يكون شاهداً على عصره، من خلال فهم القوانين التي تحكم تقدم الحضارات، وإخراج العقل المسلم من استفراغ الجهد في فهم المتون إلى إعمال النظر لفهم آيات الكون، واستخلاص القوانين التي تحكم الطبيعة، كما كان ذلك واضحاً في مؤلفات شيخ الإسلام ابن تيمية والإمام الشاطبي الذي حاول أن يعيد للأذهان

¹ أبو بكر محمد بن الوليد الطرطوشي، سراج الملوك (القاهرة: المكتبة المحمودية، 1394هـ)، ص 32.

المسلمة المقاصد الشرعية التي غابت بفعل الزمن، وأيضاً المؤرخ الإسلامي ابن خلدون الذي استفرغ جهده في معرفة قوانين العمران، بالرغم من كل هذه الجهود فإن ابن خلدون نفسه لم يستطع أن يدفع عن نفسه الشعور الذي انتاب الطرطوشي قبله، فكتب أثناء عزله في قلعة بني سلامة:

"ما نزل بالعمران شرقاً وغرباً (يقصد الشرق والغرب الإسلاميين) في منتصف المائة الثامنة للهجرة من الطاعون الجارف الذي تحيَّف الأمم، وذهب بأهل الجليل، وطوى كثيراً من محاسن العمران ومحامها، وجاء للدول علحين هرمها وبلوغ الغاية من مداها، فقلص من ظلالها، وفلَّ من حدِّها، وأوهن من سلطانها، وتداعت إلى التلاشي والاضمحلال أموالها، وانتقض عمران الأرض بانتقاص البشر، فخربت الأمصار والمصانع ودرست السبل والمعالم، وحثت الديار والمنازل، وضعفت الدول والقبائل، وتبدل الساكن، وكأني بالمشرق قد نزل به مثل ما نزل بالمغرب لكن على نسبه ومقدار عمرانه، وكأنما نادى لسان الكون في العالم بالخمول والانقباض، فبادر الكون بالإجابة."¹

وقد ظل العالم الإسلامي في هذه الحالة حتى أيقظته الحداثة الغربية من سباته الطويل بقرعها العنيف لأبوابه. لا شك أنَّ محاولات الإصلاح من أجل رفع هذا الخمول والانقباض لم تتوقف، ولكنها محاولات لم تكن متناسبة مع حجم تلك الهزة العنيفة التي نجمت عن الاحتكاك بالحداثة الغربية، وذلك بإثارتها لأسئلة جديدة ووضعها للإنسان المسلم أمام تحديات جديدة مختلفة نوعياً عن التحديات التي عهدها من قبل. لقد سبق للعالم الإسلامي أن واجه العديد من الهجمات العسكرية، ولكن المواجهة في هذه المرة ستكون على جبهات عديدة: عسكرية، واقتصادية، وفكرية وثقافية.

¹ عبد الرحمن بن خلدون، المقدمة (بيروت: دار القلم، 1992) ص32-33.

وبغض النظر عن حقيقة هذه التحديات وحجمها، فإنها أسهمت إسهاماً واضحاً في إعادة الأمل في الفعل والتحقيق بالفعالية بالمعنى الذي عبّر عنه المفكر الجزائري مالك بن نبي. بل إنَّ المسلم قد اكتشف أنَّه بإمكانه أن يسهم في تقويم الفعل البشري، وتحقيق التقدم الحقيقي للإنسانية الذي قال عنه جمال الدين الأفغاني إنَّه لم يتحقق بعد، حيث يقول:

"وعندي أن الإنسان اليوم هو أخطر درجة من إنسان الجاهلية، حتى ومن الحيوان الناهق؛ لأنه ربما يكون للإنسان في دوره الأكل - في حروبه الوحشية وعوامل الجاهلية - معذرة في طلب الحاجيات للحياة بسهم وقوس وسيف وسمهري. وقبلما تفعل تلك المعدات في قتل النفوس، إذا قيست بما لدينا اليوم من المدمرات والأسباب المهلكات... فالإنسان في مدنيته الحاضرة وفي مكتسباته العلمية والأدبية والعملية وفي بذل ثمرات سعيه في سبيل الحروب أو استثمار ثروته منها وفي مرضاة موقدها أو رضوانه عنها ووقوفه فيها تلك المواقف التي لا تقفها الحيوانات ولا الحشرات، فهو أخطر منهما، وليس ثمة مدنية ولا علم، بل جهل وتوحش."¹

ذلك أنَّ إعلان الإنسان عن نفسه سيداً في الأرض فتح له شهية أن يكون سيد الكون، فأنكر وجود الإله وألّه هواه، ولكن الشيء إذا اكتمل مات كما يقال، وانهارت إمبراطورية العقل تدريجياً، واستبدلت بالأفكار السلع، وأصبحت المادة هي المتحكمة في الفعل البشري.

ويمكن أن نخلص مما سبق إلى أنَّ الحضارة الغربية في مرحلة العالمية كانت تشكل خطراً حقيقياً؛ لأنها كانت تملك عناصر القوة والدفع والانبعاث والاستنهاض، كانت دعوة للإقلاع من أرضية الشد إلى الوهن. ويظهر ذلك

¹ السيد جمال الدين الحسيني الأفغاني، الآثار الكاملة، ج6: خاطرات الأفغاني، تحقيق سيد هادي خسرو شاهي (القاهرة: مكتبة الشروق الدولية، 2002/1423)، ص130-131.

أيضاً من خلال ترسيخها لقيمة المساواة حيث استطاعت أن تقدم نماذج لها قابلية التطور المستمر في سبيل إيجاد دولة القانون العادلة من خلال تنظيم العلاقة بين الأفراد والجماعات، وتنظيم علاقة المجتمع بالدولة.

لا جدال في أنَّ الغرب ليس هو أول من رفع شعار المساواة والعدالة الاجتماعية، فقبل ذلك كانت هناك محاولات عديدة لتنزيل المبدأ القرآني الذي يقضي بتكريم الإنسان في صفته المطلقة، ولكن الحضارة الغربية هي التي قدمت كفاءات متطورة لتنزيل هذه القيمة وكانت أكثر فعالية ومصداقية. ومن هنا استمدت قوتها في التأثير وجاذبيتها، خاصة وأن المجتمعات الإسلامية كانت تشهد صوراً من الظلم الاجتماعي والاستبداد السياسي لا تكاد تعبر اعتباراً لأية قيمة. وبالرغم من إيجابية قيم العالمية وقوة تأثيرها والعمل الفكري والإعلامي المنظم ضد الإسلام والمسلمين، إلا أن الإسلام استطاع أن يصد محاولات الهدم المستمرة وأن يستوعب هذه القيم ويوظفها، فلماذا إذاً الخوف من العولمة وقيمها وهي لا تملك عناصر الجذب التي توفرت في العالمية؟

قيم العولمة

سبق أن ذكرنا أنَّ العولمة حركة قسر تسعى بالاعتماد على احتكارها للمال والإعلام والتقنية إلى إعادة تشكيل العالم وفق الصورة التي يريدها المركز، فتتحول المفاهيم الليبرالية في نسختها الأمريكية المعاصرة إلى مفاهيم وقيم ومواقف إنسانية مشتركة لا تعرف حدوداً للثقافات. يرى المفكر المغربي المهدي المنجرة في كتابه "الحرب الحضارية الأولى: مستقبل الماضي وماضي المستقبل" أنَّ النظام العالمي بمجمله يتألف من ثلاثة أنظمة فرعية: الأولى: النظام السياسي الذي يسهر على تحقيق أهدافه، والثاني: النظام الاقتصادي الذي يوفر الموارد لكي يكتمل تحقيق تلك الأهداف، والثالث: النظام الثقافي الذي يحدد سلم القيم

التي تنطوي عليها تلك الأهداف.¹

ولكن هذه الظاهرة التي تمتد عمودياً تفتقد في تقديرنا إلى عوامل الامتداد الأفقي، وذلك لأنَّ القيم التي تُبشِّرُ بها العولمة أو على الأقل تلك التي أفرزتها إلى حدِّ الآن لا تتوفر على قوة ذاتية، وحتى إن وجدت قبولاً في بعض المجتمعات فإن هذا التقبل يعود إلى ظروف موضوعية تعاني منها تلك المجتمعات. إنَّ الطابع العام لقيم العولمة طابع سلمي، وسليبتها تتأتى من تأثيرها المعيش وغير المفكر فيه في السلوك الإنساني، ويمكن رصد هذه الظاهرة من خلال القيم الآتية:

1. **قيمة الخلاص الفردي:** القاعدة العامة التي تحكم حركة العولمة من خلال اقتصاد السوق والاتفاقيات الدولية هي قاعدة البقاء للأقوى الذي يكون قادراً على المنافسة وابتلاع المؤسسات العاجزة عن الصمود والاستمرار. ويمكن تعميم هذه القاعدة على المستوى الاجتماعي، بحيث ينحصر تفكير الفرد في همومه الذاتية فيُسقط من قاموسه قيمة التعاون، وتفقده هذه الكلمة معناها لأنها لا تسهم في الربح المادي السريع. هذا التمحور حول الذات من قبل الأفراد والجماعات نتج عن الاعتقاد بأن العولمة قد عادت بالعالم إلى ما قبل قرن من الزمان، إلى الرأسمالية في مرحلة توحشها مع ملاحظة فارق مهم؛ فالقيم الاجتماعية التي كانت سائدة حينئذ كانت قوية، والإيمان بالتغيير وبناء مجتمع العدالة كان أملاً دافعاً للحركة الاجتماعية.

إنَّ المكاسب الاجتماعية التي تمَّ تحقيقها في إطار الصراع بين الرأسمالية والاشتراكية مهددة كلُّها بالزوال، وكل من يسقط وسط هذه الحركة الجنونية لن يجد من يأخذ بيده، لن يجد من يؤمِّن له الحدَّ الأدنى من الأمن الاجتماعي؛ فالذي يفقد عمله مثلاً تنسَدُ أمامه الآفاق وتبدأ رحلة عذابه، فعندما "يُحكم" على أحد

¹ انظر المهدي المنجرة، الحرب الحضارية الأولى: مستقبل الماضي وماضي المستقبل (الدار البيضاء: عيون، 1992).

بالطرد من العمل فكأنما حكم عليه بالإعدام. من هنا نفهم لماذا تسعى المنظمات الاجتماعية والإنسانية إلى مقاومة سياسات العولمة، وخاصة تلك المتعلقة بالاتفاقيات التجارية الدولية؛ لأن القائمين على تلك المنظمات يعلمون أنَّ تضخم الشركات الاقتصادية العالمية سيكون على حساب الدولة، وضعف الدولة سينتهي بها إلى التخلص من التزاماتها الاجتماعية. يقول الخبير الاقتصادي جوزيف أي. ستيجلتر، الفائز بجائزة نوبل للاقتصاد، والذي عمل مستشاراً للرئيس بيل كلينتون، ونائباً أول لمدير البنك الدولي وصاحب شعار "حُلْمنا: عالم بدون فقر":

"قليل أولئك الذين يدافعون اليوم - باستثناء أولئك المنتفعين بصفة شخصية من غلق الأسواق أمام منتجات الدول الفقيرة - عن هذا النفاق الغليظ. فمن ناحية تدعي الدول المتقدمة صناعها العمل على حماية الدول النامية، ومن ناحية أخرى تجبرها على فتح أسواقها لمنتجاتها، وفي الوقت نفسه تواصل هذه الدول حماية أسواقها الخاصة، هذه السياسات من طبيعتها أن تجعل الأغنياء أكثر غنى والفقراء أكثر فقراً وأكثر سخطاً".¹

وهذا ما تؤكد الأرقام؛ حيث إنَّ عدد الفقراء قد زاد بنحو 100 مليون، بينما معدل النمو العالمي كان حوالي 2.5 %. وقد بيَّنت الإحصائيات أنَّ عدد الذين لا يتجاوز دخلهم اليومي دولارين قد وصل إلى 2.801.000.000، وقد كان عددهم 2.718.000.000 في عام 1990.²

ولا شك في أنَّ تعلق الفرد بذاته في إطار هذا المنطق الذي لا يضع أي اعتبار للقيم الأخلاقية أمرٌ له في حد ذاته ما يسوغه، فماذا يمكن أن يفعل من تقطعت به الأسباب ووجد نفسه أمام تحدي الجوع والعراء، وحيداً في مواجهة مشكلاته في

¹ Joseph. E. Stiglitz, *La Grande Desillusion* (Paris: Fayard, 2002), p. 23.

² انظر تقرير البنك الدولي: Banque Mondiale, *Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries 2000* (Washington DC: Banque Mondiale, 2000), p. 29.

عالم تكدست فيه السلع وماتت فيه القيم؟ لقد سقطت الشيوعية وصفق الجميع لسقوطها، فلا أحد يأسف على ما خلّفته من استبداد سياسي وفساد اجتماعي، ولكن الأسئلة التي أثارها الشيوعية حول العدالة الاجتماعية لا زالت معلقة، والمشكلات الاجتماعية التي نتجت عن ذلك ستزيد استفحالا.

2. قيمة الخيار السلبي: التضخم في وسائل الاتصال والتطور المذهل الذي عرفه هذا المجال يقابله تدنّي متواصل في التواصل بين الناس. قد يكون الفرد مالكاً أو مستخدماً لكل وسائل الاتصال الممكنة، ولكنه في الوقت ذاته يكون جاهلاً لما يحصل في محيطه الضيق، بل لعلّه لا يجد في نفسه ما يدفعه إلى السؤال عن ذلك. لم تؤد هذه الوسائل إلى تمتين الروابط الإنسانية والاجتماعية، وإنما جاءت لتقدم تسهيلات لتحقيق المزيد من المنافع المادية دون تحقيق التواصل الاجتماعي الذي عبّر عنه القرآن الكريم بالتعارف.

فالآخر - وبغضّ النظر عن مستوى قربه أو بعده من الأنا: قرابة دموية كانت أو وطنية، أو دينية، وسواء انعدام بعضها أو كلها - لم يعد حاضراً إلاّ إذا ارتبطت بحضوره حاجة مادية مقدرة ومعينة، حيث أن كل شيء أصبح سريعاً ومؤقتاً، فالصداقة مؤقتة، والحوار مؤقت، وحتى الأسرة أصبحت مؤقتة.

لقد تعمقت السلبية تجاه الآخرين، وحتى لا تؤدي الفواجع إلى التقارب الشعوري والعملي مع الضحايا تحرص وسائل الاتصال - المقروءة والمسموعة والمرئية - على الفصل بين خبر وآخر بلقطة دعائية، أو صورة مثيرة، تكون في أغلب الأحيان مزودة بشحنة جنسية قوية، وذلك من أجل أن تقطع حبل الوصل بين المشاهد والأحداث الجارية، وحتى لا يتوقف ليفكر ويكتشف المنطق الذي يربط بين هذه الأحداث التي تبدو منفصلة. هذا الحرص على تفتيت الواقع الموضوعي بتوظيف ذكي للصورة التي طغت على الخطاب فأصبحت الوسيلة الأكثر حضوراً والأكثر تأثيراً في المشاهد فيعود إلى موقع السلبية والغرق في الهموم الذاتية، غايته

تعميق روح الحياء الذي يؤدي بطبعه إلى غياب الفعل وموت الشعور، فلم يعد لديه ما يثير من القضايا سوى تلك التي تتصل بحياته الخاصة ومصلحته الفردية.

3. **قيمة السلبية والاستسلام:** سقوط الأنساق الأيديولوجية غدى هذا الحياء السليبي، وعمق روح الاستسلام والتسليم بالأمر الواقع، وتوقف الحديث عن تغيير العالم، وبدا الأمر وكأن هناك قوانين للتاريخ سابقة على حدوث التاريخ، فالقوارق الاجتماعية أصبحت فوارق طبيعية، والبقاء للأقوى صار قانوناً طبيعياً، وانقسم العالم إلى شمال لا تتجاوز نسبة سكانه 20 ٪ من سكان العالم يملك ما يزيد عن 80 ٪ من ثروته، وجنوب لا يملك منها إلا 20 ٪. وكذلك بات التحول من اقتصاد السوق الذي يفترض المنافسة إلى اقتصاد رأس المال القائم أساساً على الاحتكار أمراً مفروضاً، وهكذا! كل هذه الأمور وغيرها أصبح يُنظر إليها أو على الأقل يتعامل معها وكأنها فوق الإرادة البشرية، فليس من المجدي معارضتها ولا ينفع معها إلاّ إتيان فنّ التأقلم وتوظيف ما أمكن منها لخدمة الأغراض الشخصية.

وإذا استثنينا بعض مظاهر الاعتراض الشعبي، فإن النظام العالمي الجديد بقيادة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية لم يجد صعوبة تُذكر في احتكار التقانة الحديثة والرفيعة بالرغم من أنّه لم يستطع أن يحتكر استخدامها،¹ واحتكار القرار باستخدام وسائل الضغط للحصول على الموارد الطبيعية واستثمارها والتحكم المباشر في خط التنمية، وكذلك احتكار وسائل الإعلام فضلاً عن احتكار الوسائل العسكرية. هذا الشعور بالعجز شلّ حركة التغيير بمختلف اتجاهاتها، وانعدمت تقريباً الدعوات إلى مقاومة هذا الوضع. ولأنّ العالم الإسلامي قد انفرد ببعض أشكال المقاومة لهذه

¹ اعتقد الذين نظّروا للعولمة الثقافية أنّ الوسائل الإعلامية المتطورة ستؤدي إلى توحيد ثقافات الأمم والشعوب وصلّتها في بوتقة العولمة، ولكن يبدو أنّ الأمر أكثر تعقيداً من هذا التصور الميكانيكي، فقد تمّ استخدام هذه الوسائل نفسها للتأكيد على تنوع الثقافات وتعددتها، بل للتأكيد على تنوع قراءة الأحداث السياسية. وهكذا وجدت قوى العولمة نفسها ولأول مرة في موقع المنافسة. يكفي أن نستحضر الإزعاج الذي تسببت فيه قناة الجزيرة القطرية للإدارة الأمريكية أثناء حربها على ما سمّته بالإرهاب في أفغانستان والعراق.

الاحتكاكات وخاصة في الجانب الثقافي والفكري، فهو عرضة لكل الضغوط الدولية وسياسة المراقبة الدائمة والمحاصرة المستمرة. يقول الباحثان الأمريكيان جراهام فوللر وإيان ليسر في كتابهما "الإسلام والغرب بين التعاون والمواجهة": "يشعر العالم الإسلامي بأنه يعيش تحت حصار فرضه الغرب في عديد من المجالات الحيوية والسياسية والعسكرية والثقافية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية".¹

ومع ذلك لم يرَ المفكر الماركسي سمير أمين في الظاهرة الإسلامية الوجه الأكثر حضوراً في الدفاع عن الهوية الثقافية للأمة الإسلامية، وإنما نظر إليها على أنها مجرد ظاهرة "ثقافية" (أي شيء من باب التنطع وضيق الأفق) تنتمي إلى عصر ما قبل الحداثة، حيث يقول:

"تشارك الثقافية المضادة ظاهرياً - وهي تتخذ في العالم الثالث [لا ندري من مثل العالم الثاني؟] المعاصر أشكالاً مختلفة منها بالأخص الشكل الديني المزعوم في العالم الإسلامي - خطاب المركزية الغربية في اعتبار أساس مفاده أنَّ الثقافات متباينة بشكل جوهري عبر التاريخ. لذا أقول وشارك آخرون رأيي: إنَّ الثقافية ليست إلاَّ مركزية أوروبية معكوسة".²

وبحسب زعمه فإنَّ التيار الإسلامي بمختلف اتجاهاته قد قبل المقايضة التي تقضي بالتنازل عن طموحات الضحايا في الديمقراطية والحرية والمساواة والفردية مقابل إحلال قيم خصوصية مزعومة. والسؤال المنطقي الذي يثار بداهة هو: إذا كان التيار الإسلامي قد قبل هذه المقايضة فلماذا هذه الحملة المسعورة التي ما تكاد تهدأ حتى تشتعل من جديد ضدَّ الإسلام والمسلمين؟ وهذا لا يعني خلوّ الساحة الإسلامية من اجتهادات رتبت عندها الأولويات بشكل معكوس،

¹ جراهام إي فوللر وإيان أوليسر، الإسلام والغرب: بين التعاون والمواجهة (القاهرة: مؤسسة الأهرام، 1998)، ص 122.

² برهان غليون وسمير أمين، ثقافة العولمة وعولمة الثقافة (دمشق: دار الفكر، ط2، 2000)، ص 99.

فركزت جهودها على مظاهر التخلف ولم تعمل النظر في أسبابه، وهذا لا شك أمر يمكن أن يوظف في خدمة أهداف الرأسمالية من حيث تراد مواجهها.

إن هذه الحالة من الاستسلام أدت بدورها إلى حالة من الانتظار للخلاص الفجئي الذي سيكون على يد شخص يتوفر على خصائص خارقة للعادة، جعلتها المخيلة الشعبية في حجم القوة المسيرة للنظام العالمي الجديد، فعلى العكس من ظاهرة الاستعمار التقليدي التي أدت إلى ظاهرة مقاومة الاستعمار، أدت ظاهرة العولمة إلى حالة من اليأس والاستسلام. فهل يعود ذلك إلى الأسلحة الناعمة التي تستخدمها القوى المسيرة للعولمة كما يذهب إلى ذلك برهان غليون حيث يقول: "وأنا من الذين يعتقدون أنَّ العولمة تحمل مخاطر هيمنة أقوى نفوذاً وأثراً من الاستعمار التقليدي لأنها بالضبط لا تستخدم الطرق العنيفة التي استخدمها، ولكنها تعتمد على قبول الناس وسعيهم إليها والاندماج فيها، كما تخاطب عقولهم ومخيلاتهم قبل أن تتعامل مع مواردهم الطبيعية وأسواقهم؟"¹ أم هل يعود ذلك إلى حالة الاستبداد السياسي والظلم الاجتماعي التي لا يزال المجتمع الإسلامي يعاني منها؟

لنبداً أولاً بالتنبيه إلى حقيقة أجمع عليها كل المهتمين بموضوع العولمة، وهي أنَّ حركة التقدم في الوسائل المادية حركة مطردة ومتراكمة حيث إنَّ صناعة المعلومات والمعرفة العلمية والتكنولوجيا تطورت في المجتمع الغربي تطوراً مستمراً منذ انطلاقتها في عصر النهضة في القرن الرابع عشر مروراً بعصر التنوير ثمَّ عصر الصناعة والتكنولوجيا إلى التحولات النوعية التي عرفتها التكنولوجيا في العصر الراهن، ولكن السؤال الذي يجب أن يطرح هو: هل التقدم في القيم تحكمه نفس القوانين التي تحكم التقدم المادي؟ نحسب أنَّ هناك فروقاً نوعية واختلافات بيئية بين التقدم المادي والتقدم القيمي، التقدم في الوسائل المادية تقدم مطرد وتراكمي، والتقدم القيمي مرتبط بالثقافة السائدة.

¹ المرجع نفسه، ص 134.

لا شك في أنَّ الهيمنة الغربية في مرحلة العولمة تتحقق بأساليب غير مباشرة، ويمكن أن نقول عنها إنها أكثر فعالية، ولكن علينا أن نتساءل عن فعالية القيم التي تحكمها هذه القوة المادية الجبارة. فهي لا تحمل شعار العقلانية والمساواة والعدالة الاجتماعية، فكل ما يمكن أن تدعيه أنَّها "حماية لحقوق الإنسان"، وهذا أمر لا يمكن أن يتحقق في الواقع، وذلك للارتباط الوثيق بين مسألة حقوق الإنسان والمصالح السياسية والاقتصادية، وهذا الشعار سيرفع إذا كانت هناك مصلحة في رفعه، ولهذا السبب لن يصبح لهذا الشعار قيمة إيجابية للعولمة. وتأسيساً على ذلك، نزعم أنَّ المسلمين خرجوا منتصرين من المعركة مع الفلسفات اللادينية التي تأسست عليها الحداثة المعاصرة بدليل أنَّ وجودهم وتأثيرهم ما زالا مستمرين بالرغم من كل أساليب الحصار التي فرضت عليهم. ولا ننسى أنَّ المطلوب كان إزاحة الدين بشكل نهائي بوصفه مرجعاً فكرياً وثقافياً لحياة الناس وسلوكهم. ولذلك فالمسلمون هم أقدر الناس على التعامل إيجابياً مع العولمة، وذلك للأسباب الآتية:

أ- إنَّ شروط المناعة التي يتوفرون عليها - فكرياً وثقافياً - ما زالت قادرة على الفعل.

ب- إنَّ إيديولوجية العولمة لا تملك ذلك الزخم الذي كانت تمتلكه الليبرالية في مراحلها السابقة.

ج- إنَّ عدم امتلاك تقنية الصناعات الإلكترونية المرئية لا يعني عدم القدرة على استخدامها. أمَّا الصورة التي تمَّ ترويجها عن العالم الإسلامي بوصفه عالماً جامداً لا حراك فيه فما هي إلا جلد للذات أو ترسيخ للادعاء الذي جاء في كتاب توماس فريدمان "سيارة ليكسس وشجرة الزيتون"،¹ تلك الصورة النمطية التي يُراد بها قتلُ روح الأمل في التغيير، وتحطيم إرادة القوى التي تسعى إلى التغلب

¹ انظر Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1999).

على عوامل الشدّ إلى الورا الداخلية منها والخارجية.

ومن هنا تأتي أهمية السؤال المتعلق بالإضافة التي يمكن أن يقدمها الفكر الإسلامي لترشيد الفعل الإنساني، ماذا يمكن أن يقدم الإسلام لمعالجة اتصال بدون تواصل؟ وماذا يمكن أن يقدم لمعالجة السلبية التي أضحت تميز إنسان العولمة؟ وبعبارة أخرى، كيف يمكن أن نعيد للحدثا قداستها المفقودة؟

حدثا في رحاب الدين

إذا انطلق المسلمون من قناعاتهم الدينية فيقولون بكل تأكيد إنّ "المستقبل لهذا الدين"؛ لأنهم يؤمنون بأن ذلك وعد إلهي سيتحقق لا محالة، ولكن هذه الحقيقة الإيمانية لا تتحقق في الواقع بمجرد أن نجد من يؤمن بها نظرياً، فشرط تحققها في الدنيا شروط من مسؤولية الإنسان وهمته. وهناك أسباب يجب الأخذ بها، وأول هذه الأسباب أن تواجه هذه التحديات بثقة كاملة، فلا طائل من وراء ما يمكن أن نسميه بالتحصين السلبي، الذي يتمثل في الإعراض عن الواقع الذي أوجدته العولمة، كما لم تعد تجدي سياسة المنع والحجب، ولا أظنها كانت في يوم من الأيام مفيدة؛ لأنّ الدفاع عن الهوية والمحافظة عليها لا يكون بالانطواء على الذات، فضلاً عن أنّ هذا لم يعد ممكناً في عالم انفتح فيه كل شيء على كل شيء.

وإنما المحافظة على الذات تكون باستيعاب العلم الحديث والتكنولوجيا المتطورة، وليس ذلك مشروطاً بالاعتراف بهيمنة الحضارة الغربية حتى يمكن التعلم منها، ولا بقبول النموذج الغربي صراحة حتى يمكن استخدام التقنية الحديثة كما ذهب إلى ذلك هنتغتون. فالربط بين القدرة على استخدام الوسائل المتطورة والاستفادة منها ربط تعسفي، وقياس وحدانية الثقافة على وحدانية السوق قياس فاسد. يقول الدكتور محمد الشيبني في كتاب بعنوان "صراع الثقافة العربية الإسلامية مع العولمة":

"ومن هنا كان سلاح العولمة الأحادية الثقافة وسيلة للهيمنة أمضى سلاح

قامت باختراعه الإستراتيجية والمستقبلية على اختلاف أنواعها ومسمياتها في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وأوروبا، ووجدت تلك المراكز التي يعمل بها كبار العلماء والباحثين في السياسة والاقتصاد والعلوم بمختلف فروعها، وفي مجالات التكنولوجيا المتقدمة، أنَّ سلاح العولمة هو أمضى الأسلحة جميعها، وأشدّها أضراراً، حيث يمكن عن طريقها أن تحقّق الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية والدول الغربية نصراً على مقدرات ثقافة الشعوب وحضارتها.¹

إنّنا لا ننكر أنَّ الغرب لم يتوقف يوماً عن فرض قيمه وثقافته على الآخرين، ولكن يجب أن نحذر من الإطلاقات التي يضيفها الغرب على نفسه، من قبيل أنه الأقدر على التحكم في الآخرين، وأنه يعرف كل صغيرة وكبيرة عن الشعوب الأخرى. إن هذه الإطلاقات فيها جوانب إيديولوجية كثيفة يراد منها تشبيط كل محاولات التعامل الإيجابي مع العولمة، فلا يكون أمام العولمة إلاّ الموقف الداعي إلى الانصهار الكلي فيها، أو الموقف الراض لها كلية. ولا جدال في أنَّ التعامل مع هذين النوعين من المواقف سيكون أيسر بالنسبة للذين يتحكمون مادياً في العولمة، ولا يحتاج إلى جهود خارقة.

ومهما كانت قوة ثقافة معينة، فلن تستطيع أن تمحو من الوجود هذا التنوع والتعدد الثقافي، والثقافة التي يمكن أن تستمر هي الثقافة القادرة على إحسان التعامل مع الخصوصيات الثقافية واحترامها والانفتاح عليها. ونحسب أنَّ الإسلام قد أثبت قدرته في الماضي على ذلك، وأثبت قدرته أيضاً على التفاعل الإيجابي مع قيم الحداثة في الزمن المعاصر، فلم لا يكون قادراً على التعامل الإيجابي مع العولمة؟ يجب على المسلمين أن يضعوا أنفسهم في موقع التصحيح الذي يتطلب الاستفادة والإضافة أو الاحتفاظ والتجاوز كما عبّر عن ذلك الشيخ راشد الغنوشي، وليس في موقع الرفض

¹ محمد الشيبني، صراع الثقافة العربية الإسلامية مع العولمة (بيروت: دار العلم للملايين، 2002) ص70.

السلي للتجارب الإنسانية. إن ما أبرزناه من قيم سلبية للعمولة لا يعني أنَّ العمولة لا تتوفر على عدد من القيم الإيجابية، ولكننا أردنا فقط أن نركز على المجالات التي يمكن أن يعود من خلالها الحضور الفعلي للحضارة الإسلامية.

1. من الاتصال إلى التواصل والتعارف: قلنا خلال كلامنا على القيم السلبية للعمولة إنَّ التطور المذهل في وسائل الاتصال لم يؤد إلى تطور في قيمة التواصل، ولم يعمق التعارف بين الشعوب، وسيصبح هذا الوجه المزدوج للعمولة - وسائل اتصال بدون تواصل، ومعلومات كثيفة عن العالم الثالث ومعرفة شبه معدومة بمشكلاته¹ - أكثر وضوحاً وأكثر خطورة عندما تتغلغل الرأسمالية الجديدة في كل ركن من أركان العالم، ويتم تشكيله وفق متطلبات الاقتصاد "المعولم".

إنَّ المبدأ الإسلامي الذي يمكن أن يكون بديلاً عن هذه القيمة السلبية هو ذلك الذي يمكن استخلاصه من الآية الكريمة: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا﴾ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ﴿ (الحجرات: 13)، هذا تأكيد قرآني لمبدأ التنوع الفكري والتنوع الثقافي؛ لأنَّه نتيجة منطقية لحرية الإنسان التي على أساسها كان التكليف، فإن كان الشرع يرفض فكرة الإكراه في الدين ويجارهما: ﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ﴾ (البقرة: 256)، فإنه لا محالة يرفض إكراه الناس على ثقافة أحادية. لذلك دعا إلى التعارف بين الشعوب. ولكن هذا التعارف يتجاوز مفهوم المعلومات الجافة عن شعب من الشعوب إلى ضرورة التفاعل معه والتعاطف مع قضاياها ومشكلات

هـ. بهذا يمكن أن يؤدي الاتصال إلى التواصل، وتؤدي المعرفة إلى التراحم،

¹ يرسم ستيغليتز صورة معبرة حيث يقول: "الحرب التكنولوجية المعاصرة صمّمت من أجل القضاء على كل احتكاك مادي. تقذف القنابل من علو يتجاوز 1500م حتى لا يحسَّ الجندي الطيار ببشاعة الفعل الذي يقوم به. وكذلك الإدارة المعاصرة للاقتصاد فإنها تتبع نفس التكتيك، من أعلى غرفة في منزل فاخر، تُفرض سياسات تحتاج إلى تأمل مضاعف لو كنا نعرف عدد الذين سيكونون من ضحاياها". مرجع سابق، ص52.

فالاتصال يؤدي إلى التواصل عندما يرتبط بقيمة أخلاقية محمودة فيتحول من تبادل آلي للمعلومات إلى ترسيخ لروابط الاحترام المتبادل، فتصبح المعرفة أساساً للتسامح والتعاون والتكامل، والتكامل لا يكون إلاً بين طرفين أو أكثر يعترف كل منهما بالآخر، وليس فقط بوصفه جزءاً من ذاته، ولكن أيضاً بوصفه ذا خصوصية أو خصوصيات يتفرد بها. وفي هذا السياق يقول المفكر المغربي الدكتور طه عبد الرحمن:

"يظهر أنّ مبدأ التعارف الإسلامي يقرّ بالتفاوت الأخلاقي بين المتعارفين، لأنّ ثمرة التنافس على حفظ العلاقة الأخلاقية التي تجمعهما، كما أنّه يقرّ بالاختلاف الثقافي بين المتعارفين، لأنّ سبب في توسيع دائرة معارفهما، بينما الاتصال المعلوماتي يلغي كلياً عنصر الأخلاق في المعلومات ويعمل على محو هذا الاختلاف لصالح ثقافة الملغي وحده".¹

2. إخراج حقوق الإنسان من عنق الزجاجة: بغضّ النظر عن القراءات المختلفة لحقوق الإنسان وبالتحديد للمرجعية التي تستند إليها، وبغضّ النظر أيضاً عن الحقوق المختلف فيها باختلاف زاوية النظر، فإنّ هناك نسبة عالية منها تعتبر قاسماً مشتركاً بين كل الثقافات والأديان والإيديولوجيات يجب إخراجها من المأزق الذي تردت فيه، ذلك المأزق المتمثل في اختناقها بين المصالح السياسية والاقتصادية. هذه الحقوق يجب أن تحترم لذاتها، وكل انتهاك لها مهما كان مصدره يجب أن يُدان، ولا يكون الموقف تجاهها مرتبطاً بمصلحة مادية قريبة أم بعيدة. وانطلاقاً من المبدأ القرآني المتعلق بتكريم الإنسان: ﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ﴾ (الإسراء: 70) بوصفه إنساناً بصرف النظر عن انتمائه العرقي والوطني والديني، نقدر أنّ المسلمين هم المؤهلون لتحرير حقوق الإنسان من الضغوط السياسية والمصالح الاقتصادية؛ لأنّ الإسلام قبل أن يكون أحكاماً وحدوداً قانونية، إنما

¹ طه عبد الرحمن، "روح العولمة وأخلاق المستقبل"، مجلة إسلامية المعرفة، العدد 26، خريف 1422هـ/2000م، ص167.

هو عقيدة إلهية، جوهرها الرحمة بالإنسان، تقوم على الإيمان بحرية الفرد ومسؤوليته وحقه في المساواة التامة الأخلاقية والقانونية وفي عدالة اجتماعية تضمن له الأمن والسلام، فهو النقيض لإيديولوجية الرأسمالية القائمة على تراكم الثروة واعتبار النفعية أساس الفعل الإنساني، فليس هناك ترابية وأفضلية في قضية المساس بكرامة الإنسان. وعلى الرغم من أنَّ هذه الحقوق قد تبلورت في الفكر الغربي والليبرالي تحديداً، فإن احترامها واقعياً ولذاً يكاد يكون مستحيل التحقق؛ لأنَّ احترامها ارتبط بالمصالح السياسية والاقتصادية. والأصل أنَّ الفعل السياسي والاقتصادي فعل يقصد منه الفضل: ﴿فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (الجمعة: 10)، والفضل بمعنى التقرب إلى الله، ومُحال أن يكون التقرب إلى الله على حساب المستضعفين من الرجال والنساء والولدان. فالمصلحة السياسية والاقتصادية تنتفي عنها المشروعية إذا ارتبطت بظلم الآخرين أو بالسكوت عن قضايا المظلومين: ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (الأنبياء: 107).

بهذا يمكن للإسلام أن يواجه هذه السيولة أو الميوعة المادية التي أفرغت أفعال الإنسان من كل معنى. قد يعترض معترض فيقول: كيف تريدون منا أن ندافع عن حقوق الإنسان ونحن نُظلم يومياً ولا أحد يلتفت إلينا أو يدافع عنا؟ وهذا الاعتراض له بعض الوجاهة إذا نظرنا إلى المسألة نظرة قاصرة ومحدودة. ولكن العوامة المادية لا يمكن أن تُواجه إلاً بعالمية إنسانية، والفضاء الأرحب لهذه العالمية هو الإسلام؛ فالغرب وخاصة في مرحلة العوامة لا ينظر إلى قضايا الإنسان إلاً من زاوية المصلحة، وكما يقول محمد عابد الجابري:

"يمكن القول إنَّ هناك ثابتاً واحداً أساسياً في موقف الغرب والباقي متغيرات، والموقف من العرب أو من الإسلام أو من الصين أو من اليابان أو من أية دولة أخرى في العالم يتغير دائماً وقد يتغير من النقيض إلى النقيض إذا اقتضى ذلك

منطق "الثابت"، وليس "الثابت" في تحركات الغرب شيئاً آخر غير المصالح، فعندما تُمسُّ مصالح الغرب أو يكون هناك ما يتهدهدها تغير الموقف.¹

فهل يمكن لإيديولوجية تجعل من المصلحة المرتكز والغاية أن تدعي الدفاع عن حقوق الإنسان؟ بيد أن المفارقة العجيبة أنَّ المظلومين والضحايا لا يجدون ملجأ إلا في المجتمعات الرأسمالية، وهكذا يتعلق الغريق بالذي أغرقه - بواسطة أنظمة الاستبداد السياسي والظلم الاجتماعي - دون أن يدري! ذلك هو التحدي الأكبر للمسلمين، لقد فقدت الإنسانية إنسانيتها فمن يعيدها إليها، العولمة بقيهما السلبية توفر للمسلمين هذه الفرصة التاريخية، فهل يستجيبون؟

من السلبية إلى الشهود

ثقافة الاستهلاك التي تعمقت في إطار الاقتصاد المعولم تحولت إلى نمط حياة يملئ على الإنسان مواقفه، ولم يعد هناك فرق يُذكر بين الأساسيات والكماليات، فأصبحت علاقة الإنسان بحاجاته الأساسية مثل علاقته بالكماليات، لا يستطيع أن يستغني عنها، ولذلك صار يستجيب للتسهيلات المغرية البنكية وغيرها، وسرعان ما تتحول هذه التسهيلات إلى قيود مادية بعد أن تحولت الكماليات إلى قيود يفرضها الموقع الاجتماعي. أصبح الإنسان سجين منطق ذاتيته التي تضخمت شيئاً فشيئاً، أضف إلى ذلك إخفاق حركات التغيير بكل اتجاهاتها في تغيير الواقع، كل هذا أدى بالإنسان إلى التسليم بالأمر الواقع والاستسلام له.

إن إعادة الهمة للإنسان في العالم الإسلامي وتقوية إمكانات المجتمع تُعتبر من الشروط الأساسية لمواجهة ثقافة الاستهلاك وإخراج الفرد من حالة السلبية والاستسلام للأمر الواقع. لم يعد للفرد شعارٌ يؤطر فكره ويوجّه فعله، فهو لا يشعر

¹ محمد عابد الجابري، قضايا في الفكر المعاصر (بيروت: مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية، 1997)، ص 125.

بالراحة ولا يشعر أيضاً بالقلق الإيجابي المثير للسؤال والدافع للعمل. منذ ما يقرب من قرنين من الزمان أثار المسلمون سؤال: كيف نتقدم؟ فكان شعار التقدم الإطار العام المؤطر لحركة الفئات الاجتماعية، وما كاد المجتمع الإسلامي ينطلق في عملية تغيير شاملة حتى بسط الاستعمار نفوذه، فكان لا بدّ من إثارة سؤال: كيف نحرر الأرض؟ وأصبح شعار تحرير الأرض شعاراً جامعاً، وعندما جاءت دولة الاستقلال صار السؤال الملح هو: كيف نحقق التنمية؟ وبدلاً من أن تؤدي مشاريع التنمية إلى تحديث المجتمع أدت إلى تغيّره، فكان لا بدّ من أن يُثار سؤال: كيف نحافظ على الهوية؟

وقد اختلف المحللون حول هذه المسألة باختلاف زوايا النظر، ولم يكن الاختلاف في ذاته سبباً في تعقيد هذه القضية وما ترتب عنها من صراع بين الدولة والمجتمع أدى إلى ترسيخ الاستبداد السياسي والظلم الاجتماعي، ولكن لأنّ شعار الهوية كان شعاراً يتناقض مع التوجه العولمي، فكان من الضروري إجهاض هذا الشعار، فتهالكت النخبة وانهارت البنى الاجتماعية، وتفاقمت المشكلات، وكانت تلك الحالة مناساً للتبشير بالعملة التي ستكون الحل المرتقب.

ولكن العملة أدت في هذه المجتمعات إلى تعميق ما سمّاه عالم الاجتماع الفرنسي بيار بورديو "العنف الهيكلية"¹، حيث زاد عدد العاطلين عن العمل كما زاد عدد المهمّشين. أمام هذه الحصيلة المأساوية لمسيرة التحديث في المجتمعات الإسلامية شعر الإنسان المسلم بحالة من الإحباط، وبدا وكأن هناك قوى خفية تتحكم في مصير مجتمعه، فانعقد لسانه وشكّت حركته وأسقط من قاموسه فكرة التغيير. من هنا تبدو أهمية إعادة الإنسان إلى الفعل بإعادة الثقة إليه وبتعميق روح المسؤولية لديه. تلك هي قاعدة الانطلاق في مواجهة هذه السلبية السائدة وبثّ روح التغيير.

¹Pierre Pourdieu, "L'essence du néolibéralisme", *Le Monde Diplomatique* (Paris 1998), p. 3.

خاتمة

هذه القيم السلبية التي أبرزناها توضح لنا هشاشة العولمة بالرغم من قوتها المادية، وتؤكد أنَّ الخطاب الذي سيكون بديلاً خطاباً يجب أن يكون إنسانياً بالضرورة. لقد وصل المشروع التحديثي إلى منتهاه من الاستنارة إلى ما بعد الحداثة إلى التطابق الكلي بين الفكر والغريزة. يقول عبد الوهاب المسيري:

"وإذا كان المشروع التحديثي للاستنارة قد خرج من تحت عباءة إسبينوزا، فقد خرجت ما بعد الحداثة بوجهها القبيح من تحت عباءة نيتشه، ثم جاء دريدا الذي وصل بالسيولة إلى منتهاها وأعلن أنَّ العالم لا مركز له ولا معنى، وأنه سيولة لا يمكن لأحد أن يصوغها أو يفرض عليها أي شكل، وإننا حينما ننظر لا نرى قانون الطبيعة الهندسي - على طريقة إسبينوزا - ولا الغاية التي تحكمها إرادة البطل على طريقة نيتشه، وإنما نرى الهوة (أبوريا)، وهذا هو عالم مادونا ومايكل جاكسون، عالم عبارة عن موجات متتالية بلا معنى، عالم علماني صلب تماماً."¹

لقد اشتغل العقل الإسلامي في الحقبة الماضية بالتفكير في ذاته بعد أن عجز عن تحديد وظيفته، وتاه في البحث عن هويته التاريخية؛ وذلك لأنَّ هذا الانشغال بالعقل في ذاته، على أهميته، قد أخرَّ الاهتمام بالأزمة الحقيقية التي تعيشها المجتمعات الإسلامية التي هي أساساً أزمة غياب الديمقراطية، وغياب الإنسان الحر الذي يمتلك أدوات التفكير، ويمتلك إمكانات الفعل.

إن الذين افترضوا أنَّ جوهر الأزمات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والثقافية والسياسية أزمة عقل مستقيل تصلبت منهجيات تفكيره، غفلوا عن أنَّ هذا التصلب للعقل إنما هو وجهٌ من وجوه التصلب الذي أصاب الواقع الإسلامي في كل أبعاده. وفي كل الأحوال، لن يتخلص هذا العقل من حالة الاستقالة التي يعانيها إلا إذا استطاع

¹ عبد الوهاب المسيري، "الحلولية والتوحيد والعلمنة الشاملة"، مجلَّة التجديد، السنة الأولى، العدد الثاني، ربيع الأول 1418هـ/يوليو 1997م، ص 25.

الإنسان المسلم أن يتخلص من الاستبداد السياسي والظلم الاجتماعي؛ لأنَّ العقل حتى وإن كان ناقداً لذاته لن يستطيع أن ينتج أو يبدع إلا في مناخ يضمن للإنسان حرية التفكير، ويوفر الحد الأدنى من الأمن الاجتماعي.

وإذن فالمهمة الملقة على عاتق الفكر الإسلامي مهمة مزدوجة: إصلاح الواقع الإسلامي الذي يسير في أغلبه الأعم نحو الانهيار الكامل، وتصحيح مسار الإنسانية التي أدخلتها الحضارة الغربية في نسختها الأمريكية في طريق مسدود.

فماذا سيحدث للإنسانية في عالم طغت فيه النسبية في كل شيء فأصبح لا ثوابت فيه ولا مطلقات ولا قيم عليا؟ وماذا سيحدث للإنسان في عالم تكدست فيه المعلومات وغابت فيه الحقائق وانطمس المعنى؟ وماذا سيكون مصير العلم الذي اتحد مع التقنية، فانفصل نهائياً عن القيم والأخلاق؟

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